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A GERALDINE

BY

RICHARD ASHE KING ("BASIL")

AUTHOR OF

"LOVE'S LEGACY," "A LEAL LASS," "THE WEARING OF THE GREEN,"
"A COQUETTE'S CONQUEST," ETC.

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A GERALDINE.

CHAPTER I.

A COURAGEOUS WOMAN.

“WHAT is young D’Arcy always prowling about Dunran Wood for?” asked Ralph Fitzgerald of his son Dick.

Dick, suspecting the youth’s infatuation for his sister Shiela, fancied this the motive of the trespass, but did not think it discreet to suggest it.

“We’re great chums,” he answered evasively.

“But you don’t live in the wood; and he does seemingly. I suspect he has his eye on the Dunboyne Bottoms.”

To Dick this suspicion seemed as preposterous as Mr. Micawber's running down to have a look at the Medway preparatory to embarking in the coal trade. But his father was at once the most suspicious and the most trustful of men—suspicion following upon trust as certainly as night upon day. While he was with you he was sincerely and effusively cordial, kindly, trustful, and generous; but he had hardly turned his back upon you than he began to repent of his good nature and to suspect your good faith. Your presence, like a torch put to green wood, produced a loud crackling of thorns and a fierce blaze, but the moment it was withdrawn all was smoke and blackness. And the odd thing was that years did not lessen either his trust or his distrust. At fifty he was as confiding while with you, and as suspicious behind your back, as he had been at

twenty, with the result that he had come to consider everyone a knave, and that everyone had come to consider him a fool. Perhaps the only person in the world whom he trusted without any afterthought of misgiving was this adored son Dick, who was too weak to be either good or wicked, and was certainly too weak to be trusted.

Dick, having a present purpose to serve, to which the mention of the Dunboyne Bottoms—mortgaged to “Old Mouser,” D’Arcy’s father—was the most untoward of introductions, hastened to change the subject. “Have you seen Mick Morony?” he asked.

“About the colt? He wants £40 for him!”

“Phew!” whistled Dick, surprised out of this expression of surprise; but, recovering himself quickly, he added—“He’s worth

twice the money, but I didn't think the fool knew it."

"He knows his value to a hair, and has asked £10 more than it," his father rejoined.

"Well, I can only tell you Carmody would have offered £50 for him, if I had not let him think you had bought him."

"I haven't the money to spare, Dick. I never was so hard up."

"But he doesn't want cash down. He'd wait till March."

"But I don't know that I shall have it in March either. They tell me that infernal scoundrel Claughessy threatens to have me boycotted and put under the 'Plan of Campaign' if I don't reinstate him. I declare to God, I don't know what the country is coming to—I don't, indeed."

Here was another rock to steer clear of,

and Dick sheered off at once. "Look here, father; I am only asking you to make a good investment. D'Arcy, who understands horses if he understands anything, says that I'm certain to make £40 or £50 on him if I keep and train him for the August Show at Ballsbridge."

Though his father knew, of course, that whatever the investment yielded would go into Dick's pocket, while out of his own would come the purchase money, he equally, of course, yielded.

Dick, though on fire with impatience to close the bargain and fetch the horse home, hurried off first to find his sister Shiela, whom he loved better than anyone in the world. She was so irresistibly lovable that I should hardly have considered Dick's devotion to her much to his credit if it were not that neither her father nor mother shared it. Her father

thought girls a mistake altogether; while her mother thought Shiela a mistake as a girl. Nevertheless, she was not a girl only, but a singularly nice-minded girl—a lady to her finger tips—but, then, her poor mother's ideal of a lady-like girl resembled the close-clipped Dutch ideal of a graceful tree.

Dick found his sister in her own room, whither she often fled to escape the loneliness of her father and mother's society.

“Shiela, you can have Fin now!” he cried eagerly as he entered.

Fin was his horse.

Shiela lifted her head from “The Mill on the Floss,” tossing back a flood of soft brown hair, which had become dishevelled, and looked up at Dick with great deep violet eyes, which hardly saw him yet; for she had scarcely waked yet out of the vivid dream of Tom and Maggie.

“Fin?” she repeated perplexedly.

“Yes, yes; get on your habit. I’m to have Morony’s colt and you must take Fin.”

“Oh, Dick!” she exclaimed in rapture, springing up.

“He says I may buy him; and I’m just off to Morony’s to close the bargain.”

“Dick, dear!” she cried, putting her arm round his neck and rubbing her cheek against his, for they had not yet given up their childish mode of caressing. “But father wouldn’t like it,” she added presently and sadly.

“He needn’t know—I mean,” he hurried on to say, “I’ll only lend him to you, if you like—will that do?”

“Dear old Dick! I’d rather have Fin than anything in the world!”

“I knew you would. Come and have a look at him before I go. I tell you

what, though ; get him saddled and meet me at Enniscorrig in half-an-hour."

"But you'll want him yourself."

"No ; I'll ride the colt. I'm dying to try him."

"Is Patsey in ? We can saddle him ourselves if he isn't."

Shiela was so impatient to see Fin, now that he was to be virtually "her very own," that instead of waiting to don her habit she went first down with Dick to the stables. The two walked together across the bit of carriage drive not commanded by the windows, with their arms round each other's necks, like two boys of ten, though Shiela was nineteen and Dick a year older ; yet, when they were secure of being unobserved, they would sometimes relapse into such childlike habits ; for while he was, and would continue for life to be, a mere boy, she, in spite of being a year

his junior, regarded him with quite a motherly feeling of protective affection. When they were about to come within sight of the windows they walked apart till they reached the stables, when Dick ordered Patsey to saddle Fin for Miss Shiela.

“He’s a bit fresh, Miss Shiela,” Patsey said, touching his cap.

Nevertheless, Shiela, who was born without nerves, seemingly, and who lived such a life as might have strung tense the most flaccid of nerves, entered the loose box and went straight up to Fin’s head, undaunted by the brute’s seemingly vicious demonstrations of eye and ear laid back, of lowered crest and switched-in tail.

Dick watched her with mingled pride and admiration. “There’s no fear of a horse when you’re not afraid,” he said, sententiously.

“It’s only play,” Shiela answered, patting Fin’s downstretched neck, to his evident gratification.

“Begorra! Miss Shiela, ye’d make a lap-dog of a lion!” Patsey cried with unfeigned and unexaggerated admiration, which, however, went for nothing, since Patsey would have said precisely the same thing if Shiela had showed abject terror while affecting to appear brave.

For indeed poor Patsey was like that tailor of Montaigne’s “who could hardly bring himself to tell the truth, even when it was to his advantage.” His whole and sole consideration when questioned or consulted was—what would you wish him to say. If you asked him, “Well, Patsey, are we going to have rain to-day?” it was your face, and not the sky, he would look to for his answer. Did you want rain, it would rain cats and dogs; did you

not want it, "sorra dhrop'd fall at this side of to-morrow mornin', barrin' the jew." For Patsey was particular as a Quaker in his qualifications and exceptions—the sure note of a rigid veracity. However, on this occasion he really meant what he said, for he muttered as he walked away, "There isn't her like in the counthry, man or woman, for pluck; an' she is but a shlip of a gurl, God bless her!"

While he was saddling Fin, and Shiela ran in to don her habit, Dick hurried off to Mick Morony, from whom, after much haggling, he bought the colt for £40.

Mick, though he took many an oath that the horse was thoroughly broken in to saddle and harness, demurred to Dick's suggestion that he might ride him home.

"He's quiet as a lamb, Masther Dick, an' you might bridle him wid a sugan, barrin' he met a philosopher or an ingine,

an' the devil wouldn't hould him thin"—
“a philosopher” being County Clare for a
velocipede—the old name for a bicycle
which is still current in the provinces.

“I'm not going to cross the line, and
there's no fear of my meeting a bicycle,”
Dick replied with boyish eagerness. But
Mick still hesitated.

“Let me try him up and down the
road a bit, anyway;” and to this Mick at
last was fain to consent.

Dick mounted while Mick held the horse
by the bridle, which no entreaties of the
rider could move him to let go. He ran
by the horse's head, which he held close
to the bit, to Dick's extreme disgust and
humiliation. “Let go, hang it all!” he
cried, digging his heels into the horse's
sides; thereupon the colt reared so sud-
denly that Mick lost his hold of the rein,
and in another moment it had bounded

forward like an arrow from a bow, out of Dick's control also. In truth, the brute being virtually unbroken, was in such a mad, blind panic as to have lost all control over itself.

Now, about four hundred yards straight ahead was the entrance to an old quarry, which had been reopened recently for the building of a new house, or "castle," as the country folk insisted upon calling it, and from this entrance to the abrupt brink of the quarry ran a rough waggon road of another four hundred yards or so in length; while the high road turned sharply to the right up a fairly steep hill. When Dick had recovered his flurry at the bolting of the colt, he remembered this quarry road, and felt that his sole chance lay in being able to turn the brute to the right at the sudden elbow-like bend up the steep hill of the high road. As he neared the

turn he tore madly at the right rein, with the result of increasing the terror of the colt, without changing its headlong course for the quarry. In another moment it had dashed through the open gateway which led to it, and Dick knew that nothing now could save him except his flinging himself from the saddle. While he was trying to nerve himself to this desperate leap, he heard behind him the headlong gallop of another horse, which would probably trample him to death if he escaped being killed by the fall. So at least he was almost relieved to think as an excuse for not taking the horrible leap—for Dick was too weak and irresolute for such an emergency. In another moment, by the most daring and adroit riding, Shiela shot past him in the narrow road, and, putting Fin to his utmost mettle, gained a sufficient lead of the colt to have time to stop and

pull Fin round broadside to the road within ten yards of the quarry brink. But only just time. She had hardly blocked the road when the colt thundered against Fin, and Shiela, thrown off by the shock, lighted on her head and became insensible.

One word to explain her opportune appearance. Having reached the Enniscorrig cross-roads, she thought that, as Fin was fresh and restive, she might as well ride on to meet Dick. She came in sight of him just at the moment of his mounting the colt; and when the brute bolted she was only thirty yards behind. She at once started in pursuit with a vague hope of being able to render help of some kind; and while the colt stuck to the high road she kept Fin upon its grass margin, in order that the ring of his gallop behind might not heighten the panic of the run-

away. When, however, the colt dashed through the entrance to the quarry, and Shiela saw that the sole hope of saving Dick lay in blocking the narrow road in front of the frightened brute, she put Fin to his utmost speed, and so distanced the colt as to have time to wheel her horse broadside across its path.

Before Dick, whom also the shock of the collision had flung off head first, could regain his feet, a singularly tall and strong-looking man, with a fine face expressive of extraordinary resolution, who had a minute before climbed up out of the quarry in time to see the race and rescue, had sprung to Shiela's side and bent anxiously over her.

"Is she—is she—?" Dick, shivering as in an ague fit, asked, without trusting himself to finish the question, or even to look down into his sister's face.

“No ; she’s only stunned,” he answered, in a firm, decided voice. “There’s a doctor somewhere about, I suppose.”

“Yes—Dr. Cullinan.”

“Fetch him, will you? You can ride her horse?” he asked, with a suspicion of sarcasm in the tone of the question, which Dick was much too agitated to notice.

Dick mounted Fin, who was standing stockstill, quite uninjured, but apparently bewildered by the whole affair. As for the colt, which also was uninjured, it had galloped back to Mick Morony’s in as wild a panic as it had come. As Dick was riding off, the stranger shouted after him in his deep commanding voice, “Fetch him to there,” pointing to a small two-storied house which overlooked and almost overhung the quarry ; and the last thing Dick, on looking back, saw was the gigantic

stranger with Shiela in his arms striding up the steep side of the hill to this two-storied cottage. Shiela, no doubt, was a light weight enough to carry when conscious, but an insensible person seems almost double his waking weight.

As the stranger neared the door of the cottage, a shrill, thin, piping voice screamed out the question, "Halloa! where the h— did you pick that up?" in an unmistakable nasal American accent. He was a little weazened creature, very lame of one foot, who seemed to have stepped off a stage, or out of a fairy tale, to play dwarf to the other's giant.

"Hush!" the other cried peremptorily, as he stooped to enter the doorway, which the little man had just vacated to let him pass through.

Turning into a room upon the right, Shiela's bearer laid her down gently

and almost reverently upon an iron bedstead, which took up a fourth of the space to spare, ordering the little man the while to bring some brandy. When the brandy was brought and poured out into a glass he forced some between Shiela's lips, while the little man exclaimed in a voice subdued almost to a whisper, "By the Lord! What a beauty! Did she fall down the quarry?"

To this the other answered only, and impatiently, "Fetch some water, will you?"

He bathed her face with the water gently and deftly, and tenderly as a woman, saying the while, as much to himself as to the little man, "I never saw a finer thing better done—never!"

"What—what did she do?"

"Look here, Dunscombe; there's number three!" he said, in a tone of intense

determination, pointing to Shiela as he spoke.

“You mean to marry her?”

“I do.”

“Then it’s done!” Dunscombe rejoined in a tone of complete conviction.

“I don’t know that,” replied the other, with a sudden misgiving, inspired by the exquisitely refined beauty of the face he was looking down upon.

“Of course it is; and easily done compared with the other two. It was a tough job to make your pile in eight years, and nearly as tough to buy a property in this land-grabbing country; but any man with a pile and a property can have any girl he chooses to fling the handkerchief to. What the blazes did she do, though?”

“Hush!” the other cried angrily.

“Is she coming to?”

“No; I don’t know. Hand me the glass.”

While he was forcing a few more drops of brandy between her lips, Dunscombe asked again, "No, but really what did she do?"

Then Dundas described with great spirit and enthusiasm what Shiela had done, exclaiming again at the close, "By George! I never saw anything finer!"

"It was game enough; but I say, I guess you're too late."

"No. He was her brother; there was a strong likeness, or rather a weak likeness, to her in his face. I wonder who she is?"

"You're safe enough there. She's a thoroughbred, and no mistake."

"Oh, that! Of course I wasn't thinking of that."

"You really mean to marry her?" Dunscombe exclaimed amazedly.

"Yes, if it can be done."

“But if this should be—should be serious—her hurt, I mean. If—Halloa!”

At this exclamation of Dunscombe's, uttered under his breath, Dundas turned sharply round in the direction to which his friend's startled look pointed, to find Shiela's wide, wondering, and wonderful violet eyes fixed upon him.

“You're better?” he asked eagerly, with an almost tremulous tenderness in his deep voice; for her loveliness, lit up by those lustrous eyes, completed his sudden enchantment.

“Where am I? Dick—?”

“Your brother? He's all right. He'll be here in a few minutes.”

She looked still wonderingly, first at him, then at his companion, then round the room, and back again at Dundas.

“You were knocked off your horse, and I brought you here while your brother went for a doctor,” he explained.

“He’s not hurt?”

“No; not in the least; thanks to you; you certainly saved his life.”

Shiela still lay with closed eyes, recalling slowly and painfully everything that had happened both before and since her state of insensibility. Suddenly a burning blush suffused her face to her forehead, and she raised herself with an effort to a sitting posture. “I’m quite well now, thank you,” she said formally, with even a freezing note of hauteur in her tone.

“Surely you will wait till your brother comes with the doctor? They will expect to find you here.”

“Thank you, I am really all right,” she said, attempting to stand, but a sudden dizziness made her grasp the iron bed-head to steady herself.

“See! You’re not fit to stir, or to stand even. Do, pray, stay till they come,” he

urged imploringly. "We shall go meet and hurry them," he added, imagining that it was their attendance upon her as nurses to which she objected.

CHAPTER II.

A WILFUL WOMAN.

IN truth Shiela was yet too faint and dizzy even to stand, and when the two men quitted the room and the cottage she was fain to lie down again.

“She’s rather a snorter, eh?” Dunscombe said when they had got outside.

“Ach!” Dundas cried impatiently, for his friend’s slang had never before grated so harshly upon him.

They walked on for a little in silence, before Dunscombe, who was limping a little behind, stopped suddenly and exclaimed—“I say! Do you think she heard it all?”

“ Phew ! ” Dundas cried with a long face of dismay.

“ That last nip of brandy brought her to, you bet ! ” Dunscombe continued, quite proud of his penetration. “ And she heard your highfalutin’ account of the affair, and your resolution to go for her, baldheaded ! ”

Dundas was struck silent.

“ None of ’em like being told they’re to be had for asking,” Dunscombe went on complacently. “ And she looks a high-flier.”

“ What did I say exactly ? ” Dundas asked perplexedly, after a pause.

“ You said you meant to marry her, and said it as if you meant it too.”

Dundas muttered something strongly condemnatory of his own fatuity, and turned to walk on. Before, however, they had taken half-a-dozen steps, he stopped again, and said, almost as much to him

self as to his companion—"But she didn't seem to have come quite to herself when I spoke to her?"

"Her mind hung fire a bit; it always does when you first come to after a knock like that. You hear all that is said, and only make out what it means afterwards. Don't you remember Fighting Finnerty bidding for his own boots at the auction of his clothes, when we thought him dead? He'd heard the whole auction from the start, but didn't take it in till we'd got to his boots."

This revolting comparison of Shiela's case to Fighting Finnerty's was too much for Dundas, who, strange as it may seem, was really, and truly, and hopelessly in love for the first time in his life! His sudden infatuation would not have been strange in a weaker or more impulsive man; but in one of his strength and solidity of mind

it was amazing. The firstfruits of his passion was remorse for taking Dunscombe into his confidence in the blunt and almost brutal way he had done in the excitement of his admiration of Shiela's heroism.

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter ; it was only a bit of brag," he said, with a sudden affectation of unconcern which quite took Dunscombe in.

"Phew! I thought so ; she's only a school miss after all," he said, much relieved.

Presently Dundas and Dunscombe met Dick and the doctor hurrying up the steep lane from the main road to the little house above the quarry.

"She's come to ; but I doubt if she's fit to move," Dundas said, addressing Dick. "Look here," he added, hurriedly and with some embarrassment, "I should be glad if you'd make the little shanty your own for a day or so till she's right round,

as I'm off to Limerick. There's an old lady in charge who'll look after her."

"It's very good of you," replied Dick, "but we live not a mile from here. Cahircalla," he added, thinking that the name of his father's place must be recognised and respected by everyone.

"But she mayn't be fit to move to-day," Dundas rejoined, looking almost appealingly to the doctor, who had been eyeing him curiously all this time.

"Mr. Dundas?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I thought so, sir ; I thought so. The best bit of news for this country, sir, I've heard for many a long day was your return to spend at home the fortune you made in America—the first man that's done it that ever I heard of. We're bled white, sir ; we're bled white. All the youth of the country, its bone and sinew, its energy

and enterprise, are drained off to America, and nothing and no one returned to us for it at all."

As the little doctor stood to deliver himself vehemently of this national grievance, Dundas said impatiently, "All right, doctor. I've redressed the balance. But we'd better be getting on to your patient."

The little doctor, however, although he resumed his climb up the steep lane, did not, in spite of his plethoric breathlessness, cease to hold forth on this depletion of the best blood of the country. He jerked out breathless fragments of sentences:—"Talk of balance of trade—imports—exports—manufactures—but all the manhood of a country exported—producers of all products; sowers, reapers, spinners, weavers! Phew! You should get a lift to your aerie," the little man groaned as he stopped for breath and to mop his steaming forehead.

"Let me carry you," Dundas suggested, laughing.

"I believe you could do it," replied the doctor, with an admiring look at his magnificent proportions.

"I should rather think he could," broke in Dunscombe, enthusiastically. "I've seen him carry a calf to its dam up the side of a canon that was like a wall whose stones were always slipping from under you."

The analogy hardly seemed to gratify the little doctor, since he turned upon Dunscombe a "Who-the-devil-are-you" kind of glare, and then resumed his climb without a word.

Upon reaching the cottage, Dick and the doctor hastened in to see Shiela, while Dundas and Dunscombe remained in the opposite room. Presently Dundas, who was pacing the room restlessly, heard as

he neared its door the doctor's voice saying in the hall with petulant impatience :

" I shall not take the responsibility ; that's all I can say. I shall not take the responsibility. Anything may happen if you move her to-day."

" But she's so dead on it," Dick urged. " I never knew her so obstinate about anything."

" Very well ; very well ; very well," reiterated the peremptory little man with angry vehemence. " Home with her, if you like. Get the man who carried the calf to take her down that precipice and put her in a quarry cart. It's all one to me what you do with her. I've done with the case."

" Hang it all ! That's no way to talk," Dick cried so reasonably that Dr. Cullinan was somewhat ashamed of himself.

" But what do you expect me to do,

young gentleman? Do you expect me to be responsible for a case when you do the direct opposite of what I advise in a very serious matter? for it is serious," he added, with an emphatic nod.

Dick, without replying, turned and re-entered the room in which Shiela was lying, while the doctor stepped out into the little garden before the door.

"Shiela," Dick said, appealingly, as he bent over her, "do consent to stay here till to-morrow."

"But why?" she asked irritably. "There's nothing really the matter with me but a bad headache. There isn't indeed, Dick."

"I know there isn't, but the moving might bring on brain fever or something. It's the deuce and all of a place to get up or down.'

Shiela half rose into a sitting posture, only to sink back faint and dizzy. "How

did I get here?" she asked eagerly, in spite of her prostration.

"That big fellow—did you see him?—Dundas—the chap that owns the house—carried you up."

"Oh!" groaned Shiela.

"Are you in great pain?"

"Yes—no—I am only dizzy. Dick, I could walk down the steep a bit, with you and the doctor to help me, and then you could drive me home."

"But even if you could, you might be ill for weeks and weeks from it. Why can't you stay here till to-morrow, anyway? He says he's off to Limerick, and we may stay here till you're better. He seems a very decent fellow."

"He's—" Shiela began impetuously, but stopped suddenly, replacing the head she had abruptly raised from the pillow. Presently she said eagerly — "Dick, there's

the hammock! Patsey and Ned Dogherty could carry me down in it with poles, you know, if he won't let me walk. Do get him to consent to this."

"He's such a wax!" Dick grumbled, as he went upon this mission.

He found the doctor in the little garden talking to Dundas, who had joined him there to hear his report of his patient.

"It's some girl's nonsense, I fancy," the doctor was saying as Dick appeared. "Well?" he said, turning to Dick.

"Couldn't she be carried down in a net hammock by a couple of our men, doctor?" Dick suggested persuasively.

"You mean she's bent upon going home at all risks?"

"If you'd let her," Dick urged diplomatically.

The doctor made an impatient gesture, but was conciliated by Dick's submissive manner.

“A hammock! You might as well have her taken down in a wheelbarrow as in a hammock carried by clod-hoppers,” he growled.

“If nothing will induce her to stay, perhaps she might permit me to carry her down,” Dundas suggested timidly with a positive blush.

“Not half a bad idea!” cried the doctor, eyeing him admiringly. “I believe you could carry her, bed and all.”

“I think I could carry her without jolting her in the least.

“Eh? What do you say to that?” the doctor said, turning to Dick. “If she’ll let him take her down and me drive her home, it might be managed without excessive risk.”

“I’ll ask her,” said Dick, doubtfully.

Upon re-entering the room he said to Shiela—“He thinks those fellows would

jolt you to pieces in a hammock ; but if you wouldn't mind being carried down, he'd take you home in his carriage."

"I shouldn't mind it at all," she answered in a tone of great relief.

"All right," Dick cried, equally relieved and turned to quit the room.

"But who's to carry me?" she asked with sudden misgiving.

"That big fellow who carried you up. I declare he walked up the side of that quarry with you like a fly up a wall!"

"Dick! Stop; wait a minute!" she cried, sitting up in bed. "Come here and help me," she added, as she slipped off the bed and stood on the floor. Dick hurried to her help, and put his arm round her waist.

"I'm just a little dizzy, but it will pass off in a minute," she said, holding by the foot rail of the bed. "Now!" she said

presently, "let us walk up and down till I find my feet."

"Shiela, I say you mustn't, really."

"Nonsense! Dick, I'm all right; I am indeed; and I'm not going to be carried."

And indeed she did seem all right through sheer force of will. After they had walked a few times to and fro in the little room, she said—"Come along now, and we'll show them I can walk down quite well."

"He'll not like it; I can tell you."

"Who?" she asked sharply.

"The doctor."

"Oh! I'll coax him. I'll make it all right, you'll see." As she did.

"Hulloa!" cried the doctor when they appeared together outside.

"I wish you wouldn't set Dick to frighten me, doctor. I can walk quite well. Give me your arm and you'll see."

"But you don't mean?"—the doctor began in a tone of amazed remonstrance.

"Yes, I do, if you'll give me your arm," she interrupted him to say. "There, don't be cross, because I'm not so much hurt as you thought. I'm not; I only take your arm just to please you."

"But if you would only allow this gentleman to carry you down?"

"Thank you, no; I could not think of troubling him," she said quickly and decidedly. "You don't mind my leaning on you?" she asked, with an appeal in her wistful eyes that no man could have withstood. Besides, the doctor himself was taken in by her show of resolution, which he took for a show of strength.

"A wilful woman will have her own way," he said, as he gave her his arm, while Dick supported her upon the other side.

"We'd better thank him," Dick whispered.

"You can," she whispered back.

Dick thought this ungracious of her and unlike her, but he accounted for it by the frightful headache she must be enduring. So he turned his head and made his acknowledgments to Dundas for his timely help and for his generous offer of the house. Then he again whispered to Shiela—

"Say 'good-bye,' anyway."

So she turned her head to say curtly, "Good-bye, and thank you," like a bone flung over one's shoulder to a troublesome dog.

"Well, good morning," the doctor said cheerily. "Mean soon to call on you—quite disinterestedly, as there's no hope of your ever being ill."

"Perhaps you'd allow me to see you to

your carriage?" Dundas replied with a timidity which sat oddly upon him.

"I wish you would; we may want you yet," the doctor said, glancing significantly at Shiela—a speech which prevented the contingency it foreboded by bracing up Shiela's resolution. She even half withdrew her arm from the doctor's with an impatient movement which made him say, soothingly, as though to a child—"We shall get down all right without help, never fear."

Dundas understood the tone of this speech, as he had seen the movement to which it was an answer. Indeed, no look or emotion of Shiela's escaped him.

"So you're off to Limerick?" the doctor said as they began the descent.

"Limerick?" Dundas answered, rousing himself out of a dream.

"I thought you said you were going there for a day or two?"

“Oh, yes. I thought of it; but I don't know that I shall go just yet.”

“You were only going in order to leave your cottage to this self-willed young lady, eh?”

“I meant to go sometime; it didn't matter to me when,” he replied, in some confusion.

“I suppose you came down to superintend the building?”

“Yes.”

“You've got a very pretty site, and a very pretty quarrel thrown in.”

“It's no quarrel of mine.”

“It's as much yours now as the site itself; you've bought the boycott with the property, my dear sir.”

“Yes, it's as much mine to deal as I like with as the property, and I mean to cave in.”

“What! To reinstate Claughessy?”

“Yes.”

“By Jove!” There was some moments’ silence, during which the doctor was trying not to think Dundas a coward, while Dundas’s thoughts had flown at once away from so relatively insignificant a subject.

“But you’ll not escape a boycott even then. You’re between the hammer and the anvil—between the devil and the deep sea, my dear sir. You’ll be cut by the county!”

“Yes,” Dundas answered inattentively, and then roused himself to add, “I wasn’t thinking of that.”

“Well, I should strongly advise you to think of it before you reinstate the man; I should indeed,” the doctor urged earnestly.

“I mean it wasn’t the thing to consider whether I should be boycotted by the county or by the country, but whether the man had any right to be reinstated. I

looked into the matter, and found he had been hardly used, and so I decided to put him back."

"That would be all right if you were the Chief Secretary and lived in London; but when you're making a bed you have to lie on yourself you mustn't think only of making it 'a bed of justice'—not in this country, anyway."

"Claughessy is one of the biggest blackguards in the country," broke in Dick, indignantly.

"He is?" asked Dundas in a tone of great surprise.

"Why, he's secretary to the Briansbridge Branch of the League!" Dick replied, as though this were decisive of Claughessy's rascality.

"But that seems rather to his credit, doesn't it?" rejoined Dundas, with a smile.

“If those who knew him best put him in post of trust.”

“Oh, of course, if you’re a Nationalist,” Dick said, sulkily.

“I don’t know that I am a Nationalist in your sense; but I should be a Nationalist if I were Claghessy—that is, if I weren’t an out-and-out Fenian.”

Dick, choosing to understand this to mean that Dundas was a Nationalist, if not a Fenian, at heart, remained scornfully silent in exceeding disgust, and the doctor took up the running.

“Of course a hare sympathises with a hare, and a hound with a hound; but if a hound takes to siding with a hare, he’ll have a nasty time of it with the rest of the pack—take my word for it, an uncommonly nasty time.”

“That feudal and infernal hare-and-hound system has lasted quite long enough”

Dundas said with a sudden animation which contrasted strongly with the half-hearted interest he had hitherto shown in the discussion. "Do you remember what Richard Rumbold said from the scaffold two centuries since:—‘I never could believe that Providence had sent a few men into the world, ready booted and spurred to ride, and millions ready saddled and bridled to be ridden’?”

"I don't know what Providence sent or meant, but that's just what has gone on under its eyes in all ages and countries, and here more than in most places."

"They've got done with it in the States, anyway, and you'll have to follow suit in Europe, I guess, before long."

"Well, my dear sir, all I can say is this: If you've come back like a second St. Patrick, to propagate practically the new faith in Ireland, you have your work cut out for you."

“I mean to sweep before my own door, that’s all,” Dundas replied.

“To set your own heather on fire, you mean—*Proximus ardet O’Callaghan*” (a punning allusion to a neighbouring landlord which was lost on Dundas). “If you make it hot for the landlords, they’ll make it hot for you—you may take your oath on that, sir.”

“I don’t care a red cent for the landlords,” Dundas answered impatiently, for he had had already an unpleasant experience of the silly superciliousness of one of these local magnates.

To all this outrageous treason Dick hearkened with a hot heart. Well, indeed, was it that Shiela had declined to stay a moment longer than she could help under the roof of this low Fenian agitator! It was sufficiently humiliating that she should have been indebted to him for such assist-

ance and shelter as he had already given ; and this sense of humiliation, we need not say, only intensified Dick's disgust with Dundas. He was not, however, forced to hear any further sentiments of so atrocious a character, as they had now reached the road where the doctor's carriage awaited him, and Dundas sprang forward to open its door. Dick, having helped in Shiela, at once mounted Fin, which the doctor's coachman had held for him, and rode off home without a word to anyone. His ill-temper was not softened by the sense of the awkward figure he cut on Shiela's side-saddle ; though neither this nor his sullen and unceremonious departure was noticed by Dundas.

Shiela had no sooner been seated in the carriage than she lay back, white as marble, seemingly in a dead faint, and Dundas cried out in a tone of startled

concern to the doctor (who was engaged in giving his man some instructions)—

“She’s fainted!”

“What!” cried the doctor, hurrying to the carriage door to find Shiela, with her eyes open, smiling up at him a forced, wan smile.

“I was right after all,” the doctor said, more to himself than to Dundas. “It was her courage, not her strength, that helped her down.”

“Do you think it will be serious?” Dundas asked in a low tone.

“Can’t tell till to-morrow,” the doctor answered curtly and gloomily. He was so much annoyed at having been taken in by Shiela’s assumption of strength that he was getting into the carriage without a word to Dundas, when he recollected himself and stepped back to say—

“I wish you’d come dine with me some

evening—to-morrow, say, at 6.30—as I want to talk out that hare-and-hound subject. You can't think how refreshing it is to me to find a man in your position with your views."

"I shall be very glad," Dundas answered, promptly, glad of this prospect of hearing the doctor's views of Shiela's case.

"Six-thirty to-morrow evening, then; shoulder of mutton and J. J."

"Thank you," Dundas answered, absently, his eyes being fixed upon Shiela, who seemed now to have certainly fainted, so statuesquely white and still did she look.

"What is the name?" he asked in a low voice, nodding towards the girl.

"Fitzgerald — Miss Shiela Fitzgerald, Cahircalla," the doctor answered in a whisper.

"I wanted to call to ask how she was

doing," Dundas said, confusedly, fearing that the doctor was reading his heart.

"Ah, yes, to be sure. By the way, her father evicted that man, Claughessy, from a small farm he held under him; so you'd better be guarded in your talk—eh?—*verb. sap.*," nodding significantly.

"I meant merely to call to inquire."

"Oh, he's a genial old boy enough, and will be glad to see you, if you keep the cloven hoof hid; but he'd as soon welcome the devil as a Nationalist. Well, *au revoir* — 6.30 to-morrow evening." And the doctor entered the carriage and drove away.

As Dundas made his way back up the steep lane, which resembled more the dry bed of a torrent than a path, he used mentally very strong language against himself—the usual relief of weak men, and most unusual therefore in him. "And to

hat scalawag of a Dunscombe too!" he muttered, feeling that his making such a man the confidant of his boast to marry Shiela must have intensified a hundredfold its offensiveness in her eyes. For he had little doubt that she had overheard his outrageous boast, and that to this were due her curt manner to him and her resolute refusal to stay another moment under his roof. But *difficilia quæ pulchra*, and to a man of Dundas's resolution and resource the difficulty itself was an added charm. Besides, he really was as deeply and desperately in love with Shiela as it was possible for a man who loves at first sight to be.

Intense, therefore, was his self-disgust, and also his disgust with Dunscombe for having made this offensive boast to him, and thereby aggravated so its offensiveness in Shiela's eyes.

It's as natural as it is irrational for a man who knocks his head against a doorpost to curse rather the block than the blockhead who ran against it; and Dundas's rage with Dunscombe was not the less furious because it was unreasonable. In truth, it brought to a head his growing impatience with a man whose coarseness, which had hardly grated at all on him in the backwoods of America, jarred horribly upon him here at home—just as the savage skirl of the bagpipes, endurable, if not enjoyable, in a wild Highland glen, would make night hideous in a ball-room.

CHAPTER III.

“WHO’S THAT FELLOW?”

BE it recorded to Dick’s credit that he gave Shiela all her due at home for her heroism, even though he felt how sorry a figure he must have cut himself in his candid report of the affair to his father :—

“There was no other way to save my neck ; but how she thought of it all in a moment, how she managed to pull up in the nick of time, and at a safe distance from that infernal quarry, I can’t imagine. It was just touch-and-go—as near a thing and as fine a thing as ever you saw !”

“She’s a Fitzgerald,” his father answered, thus crediting the exploit to the family account.

“And her pluck in leaving that cad’s house, though the doctor said it might kill her!” cried Dick, enthusiastically. “And the beggar then wanted to carry her down to the carriage!”

“Who is this Dundas? I thought Kerin lived in Quarry Cottage?”

“Kerin’s gone to America, and this fellow, who has just come back from America, has bought the whole place, I believe.”

“Luke Kean’s place?”

“Yes.”

“I thought a man named Dunscombe had bought it.”

“Cullinan called him ‘Dundas.’ He’s a cad, and cur, and Nationalist, whatever his name is, and means to put Claughessy back.”

“What!” exclaimed his father, aghast with indignant amazement.

“He says because Claughessy was very

badly treated ; but he's really afraid of being boycotted."

"If he puts that ruffian back— Do you mean on his own terms?"

"On any terms, I fancy. He's in a blue funk ; and, beside, he's himself a Fenian, and says every tenant in Ireland ought to belong to the League, at least."

"It's those scoundrels that come back from America who make all the mischief in this country. There ought to be a law against allowing them to return. If America won't take in our paupers, why should we take in her infernal filibusters, Fenians, and Dynamiters? To have such a fellow as that settled down beside you as a landlord is a thousand times worse than letting the cattle-plague loose! He'll just infect the whole county, till every tenant will expect to have the land at his own terms."

"That's just what he's come for. He

says he means to put an end to the landlord and tenant system altogether, as the tenants have been ridden, beaten, and spurred like brutes long enough."

"He said this to you!"

"He said it to Cullinan and me as we were helping Shiela down Quarry Lane."

"Did he know who you were?"

"I suppose he did; but he wouldn't care who he said it to. When Cullinan told him that the landlords could make it hotter for him than he could make it for them, he said, 'the landlords might go all to the devil together!'"

The father stared with a kind of incredulous fury at the son for a little before he said—

"I wish, Dick, you hadn't put yourself under a compliment to a fellow like that."

"How could I know what kind of fellow he was? You wouldn't have me leave

Shiela lying on the waggon road while I went for Cullinan, I suppose?" Dick retorted sulkily.

"Well, of course, you couldn't help yourself," his father hastened to say in a conciliatory tone. "But it was very unfortunate."

"I don't see what compliment there was in a man giving a girl who'd met with such an accident an hour's shelter. Any savage would have done it for a tramp."

"He'll make the most of it, you'll find, and will probably try to scrape acquaintance with us on the strength of it. Cads like that, who are always abusing their betters, are always the most anxious to rub skirts with them."

"Oh, if he's that sort, we must just ask him to send in his bill. We certainly can't afford to pay him by knowing him."

"Did he know I had evicted Claughessy

when he talked of him to you like that?" his father asked, harking back to this monstrous offence.

"He didn't say, and I really don't think he cared. He's going in, I fancy, for patriotism and Parliaments, and that kind of thing; and it wouldn't pay him to get into our set, even if he could have worked it."

"It's sour grapes, you may depend upon it; it's sour grapes, and nothing else," replied his father with a sagacious shake of the head. "If he had any hope or chance of getting in with county people, he wouldn't talk of them like that to you; and he wouldn't put that scoundrel Claughessy back either," he added, returning once more to this treacherous and mortal stab to the landlords generally, and to himself in particular. He hated this man Claughessy with an extraordinary bitterness, because

the provocation of eviction had let loose the tenant's sarcastic tongue upon his landlord's faults and foibles. That such people should dare even to notice weaknesses of the kind was almost as surprising to him as though the horse he drove should have noticed them; but that they should express their criticism in the most caustic and cutting terms was such a shock to him as Baalam must have felt upon being remonstrated with by his ass. Now this Claughessy had not only told him some home truths privately, but in a public and reported speech had likened him to Ned Donegan's donkey, which was mild as a lamb when you were face to face with it, but kicked out viciously at you with both feet when you got behind it.

And this ruffian was to be reinstated in a farm which adjoined that from which he, Ralph Fitzgerald, had evicted him! It was

comparatively a small thing that his next neighbourhood to Ralph's farm would ensure that being left derelict; but to have such an insolent scoundrel as Claughessy under his very nose, always on the look-out for an opportunity of malicious injury or insult, and also for an occasion of exciting disaffection among his tenants and labourers—this was insupportable.

Ralph, after his manner, brooded upon this grievance till he came to think Dundas's reinstatement of Claughessy a designed affront to himself. At least the man must have taken into consideration, when deciding upon reinstating this scoundrel, the injury and the insult of the step to him—Ralph Fitzgerald, Esq., J.P., of Cahircalla. It would not be credible to Ralph that Dundas had never heard of his name in this or any other connection. Did he not belong to one of the oldest of the county families?

And there was, besides (though he did not dwell so much on this), the notoriety into which he had been dragged by that very matter of his eviction of Claughessy. Why, every newspaper in the country had taken notice of it, favourable or unfavourable; while that scoundrel's scurrilous attack upon him had appeared prominently in every Nationalist journal, and must, therefore, have been read by this Irish-American Fenian. It was, then, inconceivable that Dundas knew nothing of his eviction of Claughessy, and not more conceivable that, knowing all about it, he had determined to reinstate the man without intending any insult or injury to Ralph.

Now Ralph was a man who brooded upon a fancied grievance till it grew certain, solid, and monstrous—as this imagined offence of Dundas's did within an hour from Dick's suggesting it to him. He tried to think

of some effective retribution for such a man and such an act, but none occurred to him beyond the boycotting of the fellow by all the landlords of the county. This would come of itself; but to make assurance doubly sure, and also to give his feelings the relief of immediate action, he hurried off to the Ennis Club to warn its *habitues* of the character and conduct of the man, who, by buying poor Luke Kean's property, had joined the ranks of the landlords with the sole object of betraying them.

He had the horse put at once to the dog-cart and started off without waiting for the doctor's report of Shiela — indeed without any thought of Shiela at all. He started at such a gallop that Patsey had some difficulty in scrambling up behind, where he sat quaking with the certainty that as something was wrong with the master, everything would be wrong in the man. Patsey, who

had a quick eye for the weather aspect and prospect in his master's face, seeing it was not trouble, but fury, which agitated him, knew that something besides the accident to Miss Shiela had occurred to disquiet him. Presently, they heard in the distance the blare of a very brassy brass band letting off "God Save Ireland" at a tremendous pressure to the square inch.

"What's up now?" asked Ralph, turning sharply upon Patsey, who, of course, was a Nationalist at heart and knew pretty well all that was stirring on that side.

"It's the Militia," began Patsey, too much flurried to think of a plausible lie.

"Playing that infernal tune?"

"Oh, begorra! I forgot. It's them hurlers from Limerick, surr—the Faugh-a-Ballaghs—that wor bate to bits on Lady Day, comin' to play the return match. We'd better go round by the Inch road,

yer honour, for he can't shtand that big dhrum."

"He'll have to stand it," Ralph replied, giving the horse a sharp cut with the whip, and promising himself the pleasure of driving through this insolent Limerick band.

"Murder an' ages! We're in for it now!" muttered Patsey to himself.

Just then the band ceased, and they could hear the stentorian voice of Father MacMahon beginning—

"Men of Clare—This is a great day for our county and our country, when Ireland, the mother of exiles, sees her children come home to comfort and to strengthen her, and to raise her from the dust of her degradation and from under the feet of her brutal oppressors. For years and for centuries she has sent her sons and daughters, exiles and outcasts, broken in body, and in spirit, and in heart, stripped to their shiver-

ing and cowering souls of everything but hope, across the Atlantic to America. And from across that wide ocean and from that distant land, for years and for centuries, they have sent back to us love from full and overflowing hearts and help from full and overflowing hands, yet themselves they have never given back to us. But, men of Clare, now is the dawn of a new day for your county and for your country, when those who left our shores years since in want and in sorrow return themselves to gladden and bless, to enrich and to rejoice the place of their birth—even as the grey marsh mist that rises up to heaven in gloom and sadness returns in showers that refresh and fertilise the earth, giving new life to the parched and dying seed and new strength to the drooping herb, and raising up what had been trodden down in the dust and into mire, and under the tread and tramp

of brutal feet. Men of Clare, this is what we have come together to-day to celebrate and to rejoice over. This, and nothing less than this. For Mr. Redmond Dundas" (loud and prolonged cheers)—"for Mr. Redmond Dundas, in coming back to us, to live amongst us, to spend his hard-earned wealth amongst us, and to use it, as he has used it to-day, in withstanding oppression and righting wrong, by putting back our respected fellow-townsmen, Mr. Michael Claughessy" (cheers), "upon the farm of which he was robbed — Mr. Redmond Dundas, say" (loud and heart-shaking groans, which confounded the speaker, until Claughessy explained their meaning by pointing out to him Ralph's trap that had just rounded the turn of the road).

For some time the reverend orator was unable to proceed owing to hoots, groans, cries of "Ned Donegan's Donkey," and ear-

piercing imitations of that animal's bray. These were succeeded by a tremendous and prolonged roar of triumph, mingled with shouts of mocking laughter, when Ralph suddenly turned the horse and rode back the way he had come. The bandmaster, with much presence of mind, gave orders to the band to play "See, the Conquering Hero Comes," at once in honour of Claughessy and in sarcastic celebration of his landlord's ignominious flight; for no one in the crowd had a doubt that Ralph's retreat was due to panic. But it was really due, not to panic, but to fury; since he had turned to make at racing speed for the nearest police barracks. In the intervals between flogging the horse with his whip, he lashed Patsey with his tongue—

"You were in this; you were in this, you scoundrel!" he cried, beside himself with rage.

“I, yer honour! Begorra, I knew no more about it nor yourself.”

“Militia! Limerick hurlers! And you knowing as well as that blackguard Claughessy himself what that band was there for!” Ralph continued, without heeding Patsey’s ingenuous declaration of innocent ignorance.

“Sure, an’ didn’t I ax yer honour to go by the Inch road?” Patsey urged, throwing over his defence of innocent ignorance without the slightest scruple or embarrassment.

“You did know all about it then?” asked Ralph, pulled suddenly up by this right-about-face movement of Patsey’s.

“Sure, I hear the boys afther mass sayin’ Mick Claughessy was to be put back with the band, an’ all the honours, an’ Father MacMahon in the chair, an’ that American gintleman, Mистер Dundas, to shpake.”

“And why the devil didn't you tell me?”

“Deed, thin, yer honour, I was in dhread to throuble ye with it in regard to yer havin' put Mick Claughessy out on the road.”

“Was he there?”

“Mick? He was, sur.”

“Dundas, I mean?”

“'Twas him wor standin' on the churn, I'm thinkin'. They say he's a powerful big man, six fut two in his shtockin' feet, shtraight as a rush, and shtrong as a bull,” Patsey cried, with ill-judged enthusiasm, for the moment forgetful of his principle to say always what his interlocutor wished him to say.

“He's a ——,” began Ralph, and then added, after a slight pause—“I'll make them smart for this. They'll get a month each, priest and all, if they get a day.”

But when Ralph reached the police barracks he was amazed and enraged to hear that as the meeting was not one of the National League and was not proclaimed, it could not lawfully be interfered with. It seemed to him monstrously inequitable that, whereas booing or laughing at a policeman was punishable with a month's imprisonment, he, a county magistrate, might be hooted with impunity! However, he had some hope that his return with twenty policemen and a Government note-taker might occasion a row, in which the rank and file of the mob might be batoned, and its ringleaders arrested.

Meanwhile Dundas had casually joined the crowd of sympathisers with Claughessy. Patsey's report that he was to be one of the speakers at the meeting was so far from the truth that he had not even been informed of its convention. The first inti-

mation he had of it, indeed, was the sound of the roars of ridicule, execration, and triumph which had greeted Ralph's appearance upon the scene.

In order to escape from Dunscombe, whose society in his present mood was insupportable to him, he had, instead of re-entering the cottage, strolled up to the house he was having built. He mooned around it for some time, noticing nothing, while affecting a minute inspection of the work in progress. From it he wandered about the grounds of his newly bought estate, wondering from time to time in what direction Cahircalla lay ; and it was from speculations about it and its tenants that he was roused by the roar of the crowd. He made for the direction of the sound, having no doubt that a secret meeting of the suppressed National League was in progress ; and he was much surprised to

find, when he came presently within sight of the crowd, that the meeting—whatever its object—was being held upon his own property.

As he drew nearer he could hear distinctly the words of the speech which was being delivered by a man standing upon a barrel, whom in another minute he recognised as Claughessy.

“I tell you,” he was saying with extraordinary vehemence, “I tell you landlordism in this country is dead, dead—dead! It doesn’t know it; it won’t know it; it must be made to know it. We must ‘insinse it into the crature,’ like Barney O’Brien and the snake he killed in America. Barney struck off its head, but, as its tail still writhed and wriggled, he kept on leathering away at it. ‘Yerra, what are ye doin’, Barney?’ cried his friend. ‘Sure, it’s dead it is.’ ‘Sure, I know it’s dead it

is,' answered Barney, 'but I want to make the crature sinsible of its misfortune.'"

(Laughter.) "Aye, boys, that's what we've got to do with landlordism. It's as dead as Barney O'Brien's snake, but it doesn't know it; and we'll have to keep pegging away at it 'to make the crature sinsible of its misfortune.'"

(Cheers.) "We have made Luke Kean sinsible of it; and we shall insinse it yet into 'Ned Donegan's Donkey.' Mark my words, boys, he, too, will have to turn tail as he turned tail just now, and show as clean a pair of heels to the county. He'll be following Luke Kean to England before long, I'm thinking, to blackguard there his countrymen; or, maybe, it's to Canada he'll go to join Lord Lansdowne: 'Birds of a feather flock together,' and especially those dirty birds that foul their own nest. I can't tell you where he will go, but I can tell you where

he ought to go. He ought to go to America, where he has sent and shot as rubbish and as refuse so many better men than himself. There's where he ought to go—there's where he'd learn that slavery is abolished—white slavery as well as black slavery. There's where he'd learn that men are not as the sheep in his pen, or the ox in his stall, or the mud and dirt and dung under his feet. There's where he'd learn that a man, as a man, had his feelings and had his rights, which poverty could not rob him of, and which wealth dare not trample upon. There's where he'd learn maybe—there's no knowing—they tell me that birds grow out of serpents in course of time, in a million or so of years, and maybe in about that time 'Ned Donegan's Donkey' might learn in America and from America to become—a Redmond Dundas!"

When the cheers which had greeted this

sally had subsided, a man, who a minute before had descried and recognised Dundas, shouted—"An' here's himself, boys, to spake for himself; three cheers for Mr. Dundas!"

When these cheers, again and again given with ringing heartiness, had subsided, Father MacMahon shouted across to Dundas—"Perhaps, sir, as you are here, you will do us the honour of joining our meeting, and giving our people in words the encouragement you have so generously given them in act by reinstating here in this house the victim of an unrighteous eviction."

"Really, sir," Dundas began, deprecatingly, when the reverend chairman cried:

"Make way, boys, for Mr. Dundas to come on the platform."

As the crowd at once parted in two to give him passage, Dundas thought it would

be ungracious and *gauche* to hold back. Accordingly, he made quite a triumphal progress through the cheering crowd to the "platform," which consisted of two planks resting on barrels, with a wooden chair at one end to mount it by. When he had mounted this primitive platform a flattering but disconcerting stillness fell upon the crowd, which evidently awaited a political declaration of a pronouncedly popular kind, and was plainly disappointed when he began, hesitatively :

" Really, Mr. Chairman, I am not much of a speaker, and still less of a politician, and have no claim or qualification to address you, unless to endorse what Mr. Claughessy has just said about America. It is certainly the best school in the world to go to for a lesson of self-respect, and also for a lesson of respect for others ; and I think from what I remember of Ireland

we need both these lessons here in this country. One set of Irishmen have so much respect for themselves as to have none to spare to others ; and the other class have so much respect for others as to have none to spare to themselves. But from what I can learn and from what I have seen since my return to this country, I think things are righting themselves : the rich are learning to respect the poor more, and the poor are learning more to respect themselves. So I hope Irishmen need not quit their own country to learn these lessons—or rather this lesson—for, after all, true self-respect is the source and secret of respect for others, and is the source and secret also of success and prosperity. For self-respect is the seed of self-reliance, and the fruit of self-reliance is success and prosperity ; and no people which lacks—”

At this point of his homily—which fell flat as ditch-water upon his audience—the police, headed by Ralph, appeared, and proceeded to force their way with unnecessary and provocative violence through the crowd.

“Is this an illegal meeting?” Dundas asked the priest.

“Certainly not.”

“It’s not proclaimed, nor a meeting of the suppressed National League?”

“No; it is simply a private parochial meeting of Mr. Claughessy’s friends and neighbours, assembled to celebrate his reinstatement in his farm.”

Hereupon Dundas sprang from the platform and made his way through the yielding crowd to Ralph.

“Do you want to create a riot, sir?” he asked.

“Arrest that man!” Ralph cried, furiously.

“Try it,” Dundas replied with a mocking calmness which awed the police.

“The Royal Irish” are fine men, but beside Dundas the most stalwart of the body which accompanied Ralph looked small. Besides, they knew well they had no legal right to break up the meeting.

“This is a perfectly legal and peaceful meeting, and you have no right to interfere with it,” Dundas said with judicial coolness.

“You can attend it, and report it, and take up any position you choose near the platform ; but you shall not charge through it as you are doing.”

“We shall not take orders from you,” Ralph retorted.

“Very well ; I shall stand here ; if any man attempts to hustle me out of the way, I shall knock him down, and if more than one set on me, I shall shoot them.”

The dead calmness with which he uttered

this threat left no one in doubt that he meant it.

The sub-inspector in charge having whispered something to Ralph, said sulkily that he was not charging the crowd, only making his way to the platform ; and if there was a way round to it, he was perfectly willing to take it.

As the police retreated to take this clear way round, Ralph asked the sub-inspector :

“ Who’s that fellow ? ”

“ A Mr. Dundas—an American citizen, I think.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE BREACH WIDENS.

It had not occurred to Dundas to ask "Who's that fellow?" concerning Ralph, and so it happened that he called upon the evening of the day of the meeting (which closed peacefully) at Cahircalla! Returning after a long walk in the country, during which Shiela filled his thoughts and inspired his day-dreams, he asked a stone-breaker whose was the large, odd-looking house, half stone and half brick, on the right hand side of the road.

"Mister Fitzgerald's, surr."

"Cahircalla?"

"Yes, surr."

He really longed to hear how Shiela had

borne her journey home, and he saw no reason against calling to inquire for her to-night as well as to-morrow.

Accordingly he entered the front gate, and walked up the dead straight avenue to the house. It was so straight that everyone approaching was under view of the front windows of the house from the moment he entered the gate till he reached the hall door. Thus it happened that Ralph, who had been in a white-hot fury since he returned from the meeting, saw from the library window the man to whom he believed were due all the insults heaped upon him—the ringleader of those village ruffians—sauntering coolly up his avenue! Was he coming to call him to account for to-day's police proceedings—coming with that six-shooter in his pocket? Ralph, though no coward, felt anything but comfortable at the prospect of this man,

who had learned recklessness in American bars or backwoods, and who, as likely as not, had already killed men in sudden quarrels, coming to demand explanation, satisfaction, or apology. He rang the bell sharply and gave orders that Patsey should at once ride off to the barracks for a couple of the constabulary. This done, he waited until Dundas was well within hearing, when he threw up the library window and shouted, "Do you know that you're trespassing, sir? I've sent for the police, and if you're on my grounds when they arrive, I shall give you in charge." So shouting he banged down the window and retired to a safe distance to watch the effect of his threat. He saw Dundas stand still for a moment, staring at the window in evident amazement and confusion, and then turn to walk back quietly as he had advanced. Hereupon Ralph coun-

termanded his orders to Patsey, and congratulated himself upon having got out of an ugly-looking business at once with adroitness and with dignity.

“That’s a dangerous man,” he muttered, “and either he must be disarmed or I must have a police escort. He has, probably, no license to carry arms; and if he has, it must forthwith be revoked. No one is safe with such a fellow exciting the people and defying the police with revolvers in his pockets.”

Ralph would have been yet more elated by the success of his strategy if he could have seen its effect upon Dundas. He walked away utterly and abjectly crestfallen. This brute and bully Shiela’s father! What hope had he of winning a word with her ever again if he was to be thus hunted, like a tramp or thief, out of their grounds? And yet—and yet—he *would* win a word

with her—ay! and win herself. He had never yet failed in anything he had set his heart on, and he had never set his heart so upon anything as he had upon this. No doubt his unshakable confidence in the power of an iron resolution may seem overweening, arrogant, and insolent; but it had the warrant of a wonderful success in the past. Some of his wild American mates used to say that if Dundas was bent on a smoke, he'd fetch a coal from hell to light his pipe, if no nearer Vesuvian was to be had. And this fearlessness and resoluteness seemed to fascinate Fortune herself, since everything he had made his mind up to do or be he had achieved or become within the time he had prescribed to himself for reaching the goal. Perhaps, however, he did not take sufficient account of the difference between winning wealth, position, and popu-

larity, and winning anything so wayward and unconformable as a young girl's fancy. More than once, as he walked home, this misgiving crossed his mind, and more than once also a yet more probable fear that Shiela's heart had been already given away. She was very young, no doubt, and could have seen but little of her small provincial world, and it but little of her; still such a girl had but to be looked upon once to be worshipped, as he had himself found. On the whole, therefore, he was singularly crestfallen and dispirited when he returned home, and found for the first time little comfort and courage in forming with set teeth one of his iron resolutions. He lay awake for a good part of the night thinking of Shiela, going over and over again in his mind the scene of her heroic rescue of her brother, seeing vividly in the darkness the cold disdain in her wonderful eyes

as she refused his help, and cursing the fatuity of his braggart boast to his coarse chum, which, he had no doubt, was the provocation of that disdain. And, as though this was not sufficient discouragement for one day, there came close upon it the encounter at the Cloneen meeting with her father, and his ignominious ejection of him from Cahircalla under threat of giving him in charge to the police! In the blackness of the night the odds against him looked simply overwhelming. Nor did the cheerful day bring much comfort or encouragement, since Dundas awoke to find himself famous. Loud and disproportionate was the exultation of the National Press over this small Cloneen incident, and over Dundas's share in the triumph of yesterday.

ANOTHER MITCHELSTOWN MASSACRE AVERTED.

INTERVENTION OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN.
IGNOMINIOUS FLIGHT OF A COUNTY
MAGISTRATE.

RETREAT OF THE "ROYAL IRISH."

In fact, Dundas's successful stand against the constabulary made so great an impression upon the people (who were used to being bullied and batoned by them for a cheer or a groan for the wrong person), that he carried away all the honours of yesterday. To read the papers, either National or Tory, you would imagine that it was Dundas who had organised the Cloneen meeting as a protest against landlordism in general, and against Luke Kean and Ralph Fitzgerald in particular. Even his mild homily, which had fallen so dead

upon the meeting, was spoken of in the papers as a stirring harangue to the people, urging them to stand up like men to the landlords, and not lie down in the mud, and be trampled under their feet. Only self-respect could win them equality, and only self-reliance could win them liberty; and it was about time that Irishmen should experience the blessings of liberty and equality at home, instead of having to seek for them across the Atlantic in the States. Such was the *Freeman's* epitome of his speech. The *Irish Times*, which Ralph read, said that "a rowdy American Irishman named Dundas, who had made money, no one knew how, in the States, was expending it in this country probably quite as respectably as he had acquired it. Having bought the property of Mr. Luke Kean, he proceeded to purchase a little popularity—with a

view, no doubt, to a seat in Parliament—by reinstating defaulting tenants; and, among them the notorious president of the local branch of the National League, Mr. Michael Claughessy. To give the widest publicity to this disinterested transaction and extort the uttermost farthing of popular recognition and applause, this Mr. Dundas convenes a meeting (for the public reinstatement of Claughessy), to be addressed by the parish priest, a brass band, and the returned patriot himself. Unfortunately, there was no reporter present—police notetaker or other—to record the very remarkable speech of this gentleman; but the vehemence and virulence of its tone against the landlords generally and especially against those who had evicted Mr. Michael Claughessy, may be inferred from the frenzied violence of the speaker's conduct upon the approach of the police. Leap-

ing from the platform, he rushed through the crowd, brandishing a revolver and threatening to shoot Mr. Ralph Fitzgerald, J.P., if he ventured to advance another step in his direction! Mr. Fitzgerald, we ought to say, was the other evicting landlord—the accomplice of Mr. Luke Kean, in the atrocious crime of demanding arrears of rent from Mr. Michael Claughessy. It would seem, however, that this gentleman and J.P. had used up his total stock of courage in that daring deed; for, at sight of the rowdy Irish-American's revolver, both he and the police he had brought upon the scene beat an ignominious retreat! We fancy that the Lord Chancellor will have something to say to this doughty justice of the peace, and the officer in charge of the constabulary will be read such a lesson—*pour encourager les autres*—as he will not be likely to forget for some

time. As for Mr. Dundas, it is high time to teach such returned Irish-American rowdies as he that Texas Lynch law has not yet at least superseded in Ireland the law of the United Kingdom. By the way, it would be interesting and instructive to learn if this man is licensed to carry revolvers about to give practical point and emphasis to his incendiary speeches."

Dundas cared less than most men—than any man in Ireland—what the papers said of him, or what Tory or Nationalist thought of him; and his chief and almost sole concern, therefore, upon reading these veracious reports, arose from remembering that the Fitzgeralds would read them also. How would they intensify Shiela's disgust with him and the hostility to him of her father! He could picture the supreme disdain in her eyes, when—but she might be too ill to be troubled with such matters—any matters.

She might even be unconscious or delirious. He must see the little doctor, on some pretence or other, and discover from him how she did to-day, without allowing him to suspect the nature or depth of his interest in the lady. He could not wait until to-night, when he was to dine there. Accordingly, he walked off after breakfast to Killeen, and soon found Dr. Cullinan's modest old quarters. His housekeeper, an affable and plausible old lady, whose one object in life was to find out what was the matter with her master's patients, opened the door for him.

"Is the doctor in?"

"He is not, sir. He has gone to Cahircalla."

"When will he be back?"

"'Deed, thin, I'm expectin' him back ivery moment. You'll come in, sir, and sit down?"

“Thank you,” Dundas replied, entering the little hall, which he seemed to fill altogether, and the housekeeper having ushered him into the doctor’s consulting-room, remained there herself, under the pretence of setting the chamber to rights.

“It’s a mortal sick saison ; it is so.”

“Yes,” he answered, absently.

“Ay ; he’s kep’ busy, up and down, in an’ out, by the bed to-day and the grave to-morrow.”

As Dundas made no remark upon this speedy result of the doctor’s skill, she said, presently, to counteract the depression she feared her gloomy description of the district had caused—

“But there’s nothin’ like takin’ it in time, especially when it’s the liver it is,” she said, with a sharp glance at him, which he noticed.

“You’re half a doctor yourself?” he said, smilingly.

“ That’s what the masther says, for many’s the time he axes me me opinion. ‘ Will he come round, Nancy, do you think ? ’ he says. ‘ Ay, the long round, ’ I says ”— [in allusion to a funeral, always taking the longest way round to the graveyard].

“ But how did you know, Nancy, that it was my liver that was wrong ? ”

“ Livers is always low ; lungs is cheerful, but livers is low. Hearts, now, is low enough at times, and so is kidneys ; but there’s a bit of sperit about ’em, an’ they’ll go off like the crack of a gun if you cross em’ ; but livers hasn’t got no sperit for nothin’.”

This diagnosis of his case showed him his gloom as in a glass ; and, as no man hated more to wear his heart on his sleeve, he was disgusted with himself and his feebleness, and with this garrulous old goose of whom he despaired of getting rid. As he remained silent—probably, she thought,

to digest her wisdom—she proceeded to prescribe for him.

“What ye want now is to have yere liver well shook up every mornin’, like a feather bed. It’s got down, an’ dead-like, with no spring in it, an’ a good shake up of a mornin’.—”

“I think I shall go meet the doctor,” he said impatiently, as he rose and made for the door. As he reached the hall he heard her mutter---“It’s the heart after all, I’m thinkin’ ; thim tanthrums looks like it.”

Dundas, making towards Cahircalla with his swift, swinging stride, met the doctor’s carriage, which he signalled to stand. The man pulled up accordingly, to the surprise of the doctor, who put his head out of the window, and made an odd grimace upon recognising Dundas.

“Did you want me ?” he asked.

“Yes ; I’ve been—” but here he stopped

upon perceiving in the carriage Ralph Fitzgerald, whom the doctor was taking to the railway station. The humour of the situation tickled the doctor, who had heard nothing but furious denunciations of Dundas from Ralph for the last half hour.

“Would you mind getting up beside the man, as we must catch the 10.40? It would be rather hot inside for three,” he added, with a wink, which, of course, Ralph couldn’t see.

“All right,” Dundas replied with an intelligent nod and smile. He had hardly seated himself beside the driver when the full horror of the situation broke upon Ralph. To be driven through Killeen with that man on the box! What would be thought and said by everyone, and even, perhaps, by those infernal newspapers?

“Stop!” he cried to the doctor. “I shall get out. I—I have forgotten something.”

“Hold on!” the doctor shouted to the driver; and then he turned to suggest to Ralph, “He’ll drive you to the station, and Jonah and I can walk.”

“No, thank you,” Ralph rejoined stiffly, perhaps even more offended by the doctor’s mocking allusion to this man as “Jonah” than by his giving him a seat.

“Very sorry,” the doctor murmured, as Ralph made haste out of the carriage; “but couldn’t afford to lose a patient, you know.”

“So I should have thought,” Ralph muttered furiously, and then flung back a “good morning” at the doctor.

“You may come in now,” the doctor said lugubriously to Dundas, as Ralph strode away. “I hope you *are* a patient,” he added, as Dundas stepped into the carriage.

“No, thank you.”

“Well, it can’t be helped. ‘A plague o’ both your houses!’ that’s all.”

“ I’m very sorry ; but I had no idea he was with you when I stopped the carriage. I oughtn’t to have accepted your offer of a seat though, when I saw him.”

Here the doctor burst out laughing. “ By George, it’s just a thousand pities you two weren’t seen with me driving together to the station. It would have been all over the place that you were off to Belgium to fight a duel in peace and quietness, taking me with you as doctor ! What a telling par. for to-morrow’s papers ! Did you see to-day’s, by the way ? ”

“ Yes ; a pack of foolish lies ! ”

“ But you did frighten the whole posse with your revolver.”

“ They were charging through the crowd, and I got in their way and told them they must go round quietly to the platform, as it was a perfectly legal meeting ; otherwise I should knock down any man that jostled me,

and use my six-shooter if they set upon me together."

"Yes, yes ; they'll listen to reason," the doctor replied gleefully. "But why did you pursue the foe to his entrenchments, eh ? I suggested that you were merely about to inquire for Miss Shiela," putting his hand for a moment on Dundas's knee to emphasise this excellent joke.

"So I was."

"Eh ?"

"So I was—I had no idea that he was her father."

"Phew !" half whistled the doctor. "I thought it the most facetious suggestion in the world !"

"How is she ?" Dundas asked as unconcernedly as he could.

"Oh, I don't know what to make of her ; she's a very trying case," the doctor answered, with a suspicion of annoyance in his tone.

“Is she worse?” asked Dundas, with an anxiety now undisguised.

“No ; but she ought to be—that’s where it is. She ought to be very much worse. I promised her a long and dangerous illness if she stirred from your place yesterday, and she’s nearly all right to-day. Well, there’s nothing like youth and a fine head of hair, with a thick Fitzgerald skull underneath.”

Dundas began to think the doctor a coarse little man, but his news made up for everything.

“She came down on the sod,” he said almost indignantly ; but the significance of the protest escaped the doctor.

“She’s a fine girl though,” he went on, as if setting her character off against her conduct. “She almost apologised for her interference with her brother’s noble horsemanship, because it seemed a sore point with him.”

“I never saw anything like it in my life, and I’ve seen a good many plucky things done out there; but anything so quick, cool, and courageous I never saw!” Dundas exclaimed.

“Yes, she’s a fine girl, and no one seems to know it, which is a good thing, and perhaps accounts for it. If she’d been cockered up, and kept in cotton wool, she might have been as missy as the rest of them; but she’s of no more account than a cat in that house.”

“I should have thought she’d have been spoiled outside — by admiration,” Dundas said tentatively, to sound the doctor as to any engagement, or the likelihood of any.

“I don’t think the golden youth about have much of that to spare from themselves,” the doctor answered cynically. “There is, however, a young fellow named D’Arcy—a curious customer in many ways

—who seems hard hit there, but I don't know how his suit—if it is a suit—prosper. But you wanted to see me?" he asked with livelier interest.

"I wanted you to set me right with her—with them—about that affair of yesterday. I knew no more about that meeting than they did; but, happening to hear some cheers, groans, and a band that seemed to have got its brass from Phalaris' brazen bull, I walked over to see what it was all about, and was asked by the priest to say a few words of encouragement. I said a few milk-and-water words about self-respect, self-reliance, and that sort of thing, without the slightest reference to either Kean, Fitzgerald, or Claghessy, when the police came up and set to to provoke a riot, which I prevented. That's my whole and sole connection with the matter."

"H'm," grunted the doctor. "Why, Fitz-

gerald believes that you organised the meeting and were the fogleman who set them groaning, hooting, braying, and shouting after him 'Donegan's Donkey,' when he went for the police."

"I wasn't there then, nor did I know who 'Donegan's Donkey' was till now, or who the magistrate with the police was, until I called at Cahircalla in the evening."

"Oh, well, he's put the whole bill down to you."

"I wish you'd explain," Dundas urged, with an earnestness that surprised the doctor.

"To tell you the truth, I don't think I shall have the chance."

"Do you mean that he's quarrelled with you?"

"He's done with me as a doctor, anyway."

"Because you gave me a seat?"

"Oh, he'll come all right again; but meanwhile I can't clear up the misunderstanding

between you. Why not write to the newspapers? Write a letter to the *Irish Times*, which he takes, explaining how casual were your connections with the meeting."

"I suppose I'd better."

"Of course you had better in any case. There's no use in making a false start here, to say nothing of making a plank bed for yourself in Tullamore Jail. Here we are. Won't you come in? No? Well, this evening at 6.30."

CHAPTER V.

A RELAPSE OF SCORN.

SHIELA, in spite of (or because of) the discontinuance of the doctor's visits, was down in a couple of days, and out and about before the end of a week. Dr. Cullinan would certainly not have countenanced such rashness ; but the doctor, as he had foreseen, received his *cong  * from the enraged Ralph. His dismissal affected himself less injuriously than it did Dundas, who had occasioned it ; since there was no one now to explain to Ralph how casual and innocent was the part Dundas had taken in the Cloneen meeting. It is true that Dundas had sent such an explanation to the *Irish*

Times (which printed it, much curtailed, in an obscure corner of the paper) ; but the last number of the *Irish Times* Ralph had seen, or ever would see, was that which had imputed to him cowardice and magisterial feebleness in this very Cloneen affair.

Thus it happened that Ralph's conviction of Dundas's venomous hatred of the landlords generally, and of his special spite against himself, remained unshaken. He raged and raved daily against this Irish-American rowdy and rebel, being vigorously seconded in his abuse by Dick, and supported by the approval of Mrs. Fitzgerald, and seemingly of Shiela also. Shiela had her own reason for detesting Dundas, and she therefore believed that she did detest him ; but somehow after the first day or so she never endorsed Dick's abuse of him, if she never demurred to it. Perhaps the extreme violence of this abuse defeated itself : while Dick's constantly

recurring description of Dundas as “a low blackguard, cad, and cur,” was evidently and grossly unjust. Shiela, though she could not account to herself for Dundas’s intimacy with such a man as Dunscombe, was convinced of his being a gentleman. How, she could not tell. Something in the expression of his fine face, something in his manly way of carrying himself, and something in his manner, at once so self-respecting and respectful, had left this ineffaceable impression upon her. Nevertheless, she detested him (or believed she did) with all her heart. True, her father’s and brother’s outrageous abuse of him grated upon her and sometimes even revolted her ; but this was, she believed, because of its extravagance. Certainly if they had taken the man up and made much of him, she would have come nearer hating him as heartily as she wished to do. But if a girl

doesn't know what is going on in her own heart, is it to be wondered at that it should be inscrutable to outsiders? Here's an odd and noteworthy thing in Shiela—up to this her social and political “principles” were nothing but her father's and brother's extreme Tory prejudices “writ large.” Now, however, she had continually in her mind, as the text of a new social and political faith, the striking sentence—“I never could believe that Providence had sent a few men into the world ready booted and spurred to ride, and millions ready saddled and bridled to be ridden.” She had the strangest and strongest longing to learn something about the man, who, she understood, had died in and for this faith upon the scaffold! But his name she had forgotten, and even if she had remembered it, the sorry library at Cahircalla was little likely to contain a book recording his martyrdom.

Now Killeen was blessed with a clergyman who had carried everything in his day before him in Trinity, and was always spoken of as “a most able and distinguished divine.” He was perhaps the poorest of all those poor creatures who hoard up knowledge as a miser hoards up gold, without a notion of benefiting with it either himself or others. He not merely bought nothing with it, but he never even, so to say, changed it—never put it into other shape in his mind to realise its meaning and value—but locked it up uselessly in his memory in the precise form in which he had found it in some book. If you asked him, for instance, for this passage in Epictetus, he would find or repeat it for you in the Greek, perhaps, without the faintest notion of its applicability to himself:—“For the sheep do not manifest to the shepherds how much they have eaten by

producing fodder ; but inwardly digesting their food, they produce outwardly wool and milk." He assimilated nothing of all he had read, but reproduced it as he had swallowed it—whole, without having chewed, or ruminated, or digested it. I do not mean merely that all this learning left him to seek in the practical affairs of life and in the ways of the world ; but that it did not broaden by a nail's breadth his mind, his views, or his principles. The most ignorant lout in the parish was not narrower in his views of God, of man, of Nature, and of life than the Rev. Dr. John Medge.

It was on the occasion of this gentleman's dining, as he sometimes did, at Cahircalla, that Shiela for the first time quoted her text with startling effect. During dinner the conversation had turned upon the change in the manners of the peasantry observable

of late, and attributable, according to Dr. Medge, to such returned Irish-Americans as Mr. Dundas. As this gentleman, though a nominal Protestant, did not attend Dr. Medge's church, the vicar was as hearty in his abuse of him as Ralph and Dick themselves, his attacks being, of course, directed against Dundas's "Atheism and Socialism," while theirs were levelled against his "Fenianism and Land Leagueism." Both, however, agreed that the change in the manner of the peasantry, of whom they spoke precisely as an Anglo-Indian speaks of "the natives," was due to the demoralisation of the precept and example of such returned Irish-Americans as Dundas. Presently it appeared that when they spoke of "civility" they meant "servility," and that the good old times they deplored were those in which the wretched peasantry cowered, cringed, and crawled at the feet of men who,

virtually, as landlords, held their lives in their hands.

“You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house ; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.”

While, however, Ralph recalled chiefly the days when no tenant ever dreamed of voting otherwise than as he was bid by his landlord, Dr. Medge dwelt upon the enormity of “the Papists,” not only building a chapel opposite, or nearly opposite his church, but absolutely calling it “a church!” Why, ten years ago they would no more think of calling a “chapel” a “church” than they would think of calling a “cabin” a “palace!” They had altogether forgotten “their place ;” and their proper place, according to this worthy divine, seemed to be much that of a spaniel sent to heel with a kick by his master. This talk of the peasantry as

“aborigines,” who seemed of late to have forgotten that they lived only on the sufferance of “the settlers,” grated intolerably upon Shiela, who, however, as she was not addressed by the speakers, kept silence for some time even from good words. She never did take part in her father’s presence in any conversation of the kind, except she was directly appealed to. She was so appealed to presently by Dr. Medge, when he could get no other auditor—Ralph and Dick absorbed in controversy as to the date of the rejection by the constituency of Maloney, of Aherbeg.

“Haven’t you noticed a marked difference in their manner of late, Miss Shiela?”

“No; I have always found them exceedingly civil,” she answered decisively, to his amazement.

“Civil? Well, yes, they’re civil in a way, but not in the old way; not as if they

remembered their position and your position."

Shiela glanced over at Dick to be quite sure that he was not listening, before she asked in a low voice and with a violent blush, "Who is it says 'I never could believe that Providence sent a few men into the world ready booted and spurred to ride, and millions ready saddled and bridled to be ridden'?"

Dr. Medge stared at her as though she had blasphemed. He had not the least idea who had said it; but since he posed in the parish as an encyclopædia, he was not going to confess his ignorance. He proceeded to conceal it by a long lecture to Shiela upon order and subordination, and the passive obedience inculcated by St. Paul. "I only wanted to know who said it," Shiela ventured to say in a low tone, which the vicar took to indicate an abashed

admission of the heinousness of the sentiment.

“But why should you want to know? His works would certainly not profit you. May I ask where you read or heard that silly clap-trap?”

This was unconsciously carrying the war into the enemy's camp with a vengeance. Shiela blushed up to the eyes and murmured only, “I heard someone quote it, and wondered who had said it.”

“You may take my word for it,” said the oracle pompously, “his works are not fit reading for a young lady—anything but that—anything but that.”

When, however, the oracle, upon returning home, consulted his *Familiar Quotations*, and discovered that the speaker of the words was Richard Rumbold, who had guarded the scaffold on which Charles I. was executed, and had owned the house

in which the Rye House plot was hatched, he was mortified beyond measure. For, in the first place, Rumbold, of whose "works" he had spoken to Shiela, had never written a line; and, in the second place, this "miscreant Cromwellian, regicide and assassin," could have been held up with great effect to her as the kind of character above all others from whom such a sentiment might have been expected. The remorse of this *riposte d'escalier*, to use the happy French phrase for a hang-fire retort of this kind, riveted the conversation with Shiela in his memory. But what had riveted the quotation in Shiela's memory? That is the interesting question which we wished to suggest to the reader by recording her conversation with the vicar. Was it solely the intrinsic truth and justice of the sentiment that had fixed it ineffaceably in her remembrance? It could have been

nothing else, since she told herself many times a day that she detested the man who had quoted it, assuring herself of this in the most perfect good faith. Still there is, perhaps, just some faint hope for a man whom a girl tells herself many times a day, with an energetic stamp of her small foot even, that she detests. Even if she should think of him *all day long* with emphatic detestation, let him not utterly despair. But detestation, however hearty, needs new fuel to keep it aglow, and Shiela, on the day following her conversation with the vicar, seemed in search of it. She was taking some wool to a crippled lad who supported himself by knitting socks and stockings (which he could do more deftly than most women), when she saw Dunscombe limping before her into his cabin. In spite of her horror of this vulgar little wretch, she followed, wondering. As she reached the

door, she heard the shrill, thin voice of the little man saying—"I've a game leg of my own, sonny; two bullets in it; and I should have had a handful more here," striking his chest, "but for that thundering fine fellow Dundas. There's a man for you, sonny! Seen him? No? Six feet two in his socks; you must make him a pair of socks, sonny—least you can do, eh?"

"I will, yer honour, an' a dozen pair. God in heaven bless him!"

"Ay, send the bill up there—you Irish fly your kites high—fly 'em up to heaven. Such folk for blessings I never heard—well, it's a cheap way to pay your debts, anyhow."

Here, seeing the boy's large eyes, hollow with privation and illness, fixed on the doorway, Dunscombe looked round and perceived Shiela.

"Halloa! I beg your pardon, Miss—Miss — Very glad to see you all right again,"

he cried, starting up ; then limping towards her with the chair on which he had been seated—the sole chair in the cabin—he added, “ Sit down, miss.”

But Shiela, having just overheard how he had been lamed, felt, for some reason, more pity than before for his infirmity.

“ No, no, you sit, please,” she replied, with an involuntary glance at his lame foot ; “ I shall not stay long.”

“ I couldn't think, miss—”

“ Do, pray, sit,” she urged.

“ Well, miss, since you are so con—siderate, I'll just sit beside my mate here—fellow-cripples, miss, fellow-cripples,” taking his seat on the side of the bed.

“ Mr. Dundas has sent me this, Miss Shiela,” the boy said, holding out a sovereign.”

“ Very kind, I'm sure,” she murmured stiffly.

“You see, miss,” sneered Dunscombe in his piping, piercing voice, “he wants to become an M.P., or a J.P., or a P.P., that’s what he’s up to,” a sudden recollection of the furious newspaper onslaughts upon his patron, and their suggestions of all kinds of corrupt or small motives for his generosity occurring to him upon his noticing Shiela’s cutting tone.

“Ay, that’s what he’s going for,” he continued; “*he* never does nothing for nothing, you bet. I found out that when he stood up to them fellows that ’ud have shot me down like a dog—one agin three, he stood up to them. What for? He never seen me before he seen me down with a bullet theer, that’s theer yet,” clasp-
ing his left leg above the ankle with his right hand. “But ye see, miss, he wanted to nurse me till the wound was well, and to support me ever since — that’s what

he wanted. Always up to something, he is."

Shiela, at the close of this outburst, rose to make a stately exit, but remained standing nervously by the bed-head, even after she had given the wool to the boy. "I'm glad you've found so good a friend, Brian," she said gently, in significant contrast to her former tone.

"Hope I haven't offended you, miss," Dunscombe hastened to say in a kind of apologetic acknowledgment of her change of tone.

"Me? Oh, no; not at all."

"Thim newspapers is enough to make St. Peter sit up and snort; with their lies an' their libels drivin' a man out of the country who came back to spend his money among 'em. More nor this man 'ill miss him when he's gone, you bet; an' more nor me 'ill rejice to have him back in Texas."

There was a moment or two's dead silence, and then Shiela said—

“I must get back, Brian, but I hope to come soon again to see you. Good morning.”

“Good morning, Miss Shiela, an' thank ye kindly, miss.”

“Good morning,” she turned to say nervously to Dunscombe.

“Good mornin' to you, miss ; an' I hope you'll forgive my speakin' up for the best friend ever a man had.”

“Of course ; there was nothing to forgive,” she murmured in a low and hurried tone, as she quitted the cabin.

Instead of returning home, as she had suggested to Brian she was about to do, she walked towards a wood that divided in two her father's property, in which she sometimes took a solitary ramble.

So he was going back for good to

America—driven there by all this baseless abuse. She had no doubt at all that it was baseless. He had come back to Ireland with all kinds of good intentions, which were misunderstood and misrepresented on every side, until he was thoroughly sick of the country and of the people. It was curious how absolutely convinced Shiela had become of the disinterested beneficence of Dundas, now that she knew he was quitting the country forever; but there is this at least to be said for her conviction—that the cynical and sour-looking little man, Dunscombe, was not of the worshipping sort. His dog-like devotion to one whom he knew so intimately as Dundas was therefore a strong testimony to his patron's fine qualities. However, Shiela would certainly not have acknowledged this to herself if Dundas were going to stay in the country. She could even acknowledge

now to herself that in her inmost heart she did not really detest him as much as she had imagined and as he had deserved. He would be as irrevocably removed from her by a final return to Texas as by death ; and she felt as free, therefore, to forgive him, and more than forgive him, as though he had died. A good deal more than forgive him ! Strange what a void the disappearance of this “detestation” feeling left in her heart ! How empty life also had suddenly become ! She walked aimlessly through the wood, strangely dejected and wretched, till she came in sight of the high road and of Dr. Cullinan, who for a wonder was walking.

“Halloa, Miss Shiela !” he cried cheerily at sight of her. “You’ll not cut me, I know, since you have punished me enough already.”

“How ?” she asked, as she shook hands

most cordially with him across the low railing which separated the wood from the road.

“How? By getting well at once without me, and even against my most solemn promise to you of a long illness.”

“On condition that you attended me,” she answered readily and archly. “I’m sure you’d have kept your promise if you could.”

“’Pon my word! So *you* voted for my dismissal?”

“No,” she answered with sudden seriousness and with an emphatic shake of the head. “I was very sorry indeed; but father was a good deal put out by the newspapers and—and other things.”

“I assure you, Miss Shiela,” the doctor urged ardently, “your father is utterly mistaken about Dundas — utterly mistaken. He doesn’t care two straws for politics, and is no more a Land Leaguer than he is a

Tory. He thought that fellow Claughessy ill-used—and I'm not sure myself that he wasn't—and being a Don Quixote kind of man, nothing would deter him from righting a wrong at any cost to himself. That's just the whole truth of the matter; and it's a pity your father can't be made to see it, for he would find Dundas the pleasantest of neighbours."

"But he is going back to America," she said nervously.

"Going back to America! Nothing of the sort. Where did you hear that?"

"I've just heard it from his companion, who was with Brian Hurley when I called."

"What! From Dunscombe? Very good authority; but I've better. It's not an hour since I had a long talk with Dundas himself, when he was showing me over the fine house he is building. I was chaffing him about

being lost in it as a bachelor, when he said he had no intention of remaining a bachelor, and indeed, spoke so certainly of being married to an Irish girl, that I have no doubt at all of his being engaged to one. I wonder who she is," the doctor added reflectively, more to himself than to Shiela.

She tried to think of something—anything—to say; but she could not, and her growing embarrassment was not lessened by her consciousness of a crimson face.

However, to her immense relief, the doctor, noticing neither her silence nor her colour, went on with his speculation: "She's someone in the immediate neighbourhood, I'm certain from something he said," looking, as Shiela thought, with a significant and odious archness at her. This man had absolutely bragged to the doctor also that he meant to marry her! She was perfectly furious, and in the reaction from her

relenting mood of a few minutes since, she now really detested Dundas with her whole heart. But the doctor intended whatever archness his look expressed to mean that Dundas's resolve to mate at home gave a chance to the girls in the neighbourhood, including Shiela; and the "something he (Dundas) had said," was simply a Cheshire proverb which the doctor thought too homely to quote to Shiela. Dundas, in repudiating the doctor's suggestion that he was going to follow the fashion of the dukes and import an American bride, had quoted: "Better wed over the mixen than over the moor"—a proverb current among Cheshire farmers—"the mixen" being the dung-heap at their door, and "the moor" being the fens of Staffordshire, through which ran the road to London. Nevertheless it was natural, and even inevitable, that Shiela should construe

the archness of the doctor's glance to mean that Dundas had made the same insolent boast about her to him that he had made to Dunscombe. Being a girl of a singularly high spirit, she now scorned Dundas all the more because she had found herself a few minutes since relenting towards him so dangerously.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE QUEEN'S NAME.

DUNDAS had certainly said under excessive provocation that he would quit this police-ridden country and return to the States ; but he had reconsidered the resolve on reflection—the chief subject and substance of this reflection being Shiela. But what was the provocation to his original resolve? As our story hinges upon it, we must explain it at some length.

The day after the appearance in the Unionist newspapers of the articles demanding indignantly what the authorities meant by licensing this returned Irish-

American rowdy to carry arms, or in allowing him to carry them unlicensed, no less than four of the stalwart Royal Irish Constabulary, armed with revolvers, were despatched to Quarry Cottage. Now, Dundas, disliking and despising the force as hectoring mercenaries, who showed the ferocity of renegades towards the peasantry from whom they were recruited, was in no mood of meek submission when the sergeant and three constables set about bullying him.

“What do you want?” he asked sharply, when he had opened the door in answer to a thundering knock.

“We demand admittance in the Queen’s name,” the sergeant answered pompously.

“If you demanded it in the devil’s name you wouldn’t get it till I knew your business,” Dundas answered, proceeding to shut the door in their faces. But the sergeant, stepping quickly forward, interposed his

body to prevent the door being closed, and said insolently—

“Come, my man, this won’t do.”

Dundas being himself a man of immense strength, could have—and would have—ejected the sergeant, if two of the constables had not together flung their weight against the door and burst it open. Dundas kept his hold upon the sergeant, whom he had seized by the shoulders, and just as the two constables burst headlong into the cottage, he shot the sergeant out into the little garden in front, and then turned upon the two invaders. Before, however, he could re-enter the cottage, he was pinned and pinioned from behind by the sergeant and the other constable.

“Search him!” cried the sergeant, beside himself with fury.

Dundas struggled desperately, but in vain, for a third constable now had hold of him.

Dundas ceased to struggle, and turning upon the sergeant a face rigid and white as death with suppressed rage, he asked in a voice as quiet and ominous as his face—

“What does this mean?”

The sergeant, awed by the expression of his face and by the tone of his voice, answered sullenly, “We’ve got a warrant to search both your house and your person for arms.”

“Have you a warrant to break into my house without a word of explanation?”

“We told you we had a search-warrant,” the sergeant answered, looking to his men for confirmation of this audacious falsehood, which two of the constables gave by an assenting murmur.

“You told me you had a search-warrant?” Dundas said, pronouncing each word separately with *staccato* distinctness.

“Certainly,” replied the sergeant. “Here

it is," unfolding the documents. Then he turned to one of the men to say—"Dogherty, search him."

Dogherty proceeded about the business with all the skill, and at the same time with all the mechanical deliberation of an expert, while Dundas submitted without a word or movement of remonstrance. No arms having been found upon him, they released him; but the set, white determination in his face so awed and unnerved the sergeant that he ordered Dogherty to search the house, while he himself and the other three constables surrounded Dundas. In truth, the sergeant feared that Dundas would make a dash for his revolver and revenge the humiliation, which he plainly felt so savagely, by shooting down as many as possible of the enemy before they could put a bullet through him.

However, Dogherty's search, which was certainly sufficiently exhaustive, for he tried

up the chimneys and sounded the boards and walls, was rewarded only by the discovery in a drawer of a box half full of revolver cartridges, which the sergeant impounded. Where was the revolver they fitted? Dundas had certainly had it when he threatened on Wednesday to shoot the man who would venture to lay a hand upon him. What had since become of it? Had he hidden it elsewhere upon reading the angry articles in the papers urging the authorities to disarm him? Or had that little chum of his, Dunscombe, taken it out with him? At this moment Dunscombe himself appeared in the doorway, looking with amazement at the invasion.

“Halloa!” he cried. “What’s up? Getting up an outrage, eh?”

“We shall have to search you for arms,” the sergeant cried. “Dogherty—”

“Hold!” Dundas cried in a cool, com-

manding tone. "Have you a warrant to search this gentleman?"

As the sergeant remained silent, Dundas continued—

"If you attempt to search him without a warrant, he will have an action against you for assault, and he'll take it."

This made the sergeant pause for a moment; but, recovering himself presently, he ordered the constables outside, and held there a whispered conference with them. Its result was the despatch of two of them for a warrant to search Dunscombe, while the sergeant and the other constable remained behind to keep him in sight.

Dundas, taking in the situation at a glance, motioned Dunscombe to follow him; and the two strode together up the hill towards Dundas's new house. When they had entered the gate leading into the lawn which surrounded the house, Dundas turned

and shut and locked it in the face of the two constables.

“Will you go up and see how they are getting on?” he said quietly to Dunscombe, pointing over his shoulder to the house.

“All right,” Dunscombe answered cheerily, and walked off, whistling as he went, “Harvey Duff”—a tune that infuriates the Royal Irish to madness.

“We demand admittance,” the sergeant cried furiously.

“On what ground? You’ve no warrant, and therefore no more right in my lawn than any other trespasser. Attempt to break in and I shall know how to deal with you.”

There was a fell intensity in Dundas’s tone which suggested to the sergeant that Dunscombe had passed the revolver to his chum while the constabulary were in consultation outside Quarry Cottage. If Dundas had it, reflected the sergeant, he would

use it without hesitation or scruple in his present mood of deadly rage with the man who had ordered him to be pinioned and searched like the vilest felon. Therefore, after a moment's pause, the sergeant said with a sardonic grin—

“Very well ; we shall only have to search you again to-morrow.”

As he and the constable turned away, Dundas said, quietly and slowly—

“If ever you lay a finger on me again, I shall shoot you like a dog.” A memorable threat.

Dundas was not searched again. Both he and Dunscombe would to a certainty have been so searched within a few days but for an event of which we shall presently speak. The search was put off for these few days owing to pressure of police work in other directions ; in spite of the sergeant's repeated declarations that he went in fear of his life

while this Irish-American rowdy was allowed to retain his revolver. Had Dundas not threatened "to shoot him down like a dog?" More than once the sergeant, too, had said both to his men and to his officer, that "if ever he saw murder in a man's eye, he saw it in Dundas's." Nevertheless, as we have said, Dundas was not troubled by a second police visit immediately, because at this time the Royal Irish had other hares to hunt. There was, in fact, a virulent outbreak of moonlighting in the neighbourhood—to Dundas's perplexity, because as far as he could see there was no respect paid either to persons or to politics in these random raids.

"What the devil does it all mean?" he asked the doctor. "Is it patriotism, or Land Leagueism, or Fenianism?"

"Blackguardism, my dear sir, blackguardism, pure and simple."

“Do you mean that it has nothing whatever to do with either the land question or the Home Rule question?”

“Nothing now with either. The original Kerry Moonlighters were, I believe, evicted tenants—outcasts and virtual outlaws—who had some provocation, and sometimes savage provocation, for their murderous reprisals; but they were only the light that set the heather on fire.”

“It must have been dry as tinder, then.”

“So it was. It was a case in Kerry of another king arising who knew not Joseph, and who put upon the people heavier burdens than they could bear. The old landlord and agent were easy-going and popular; but the new man, having married into a big and ambitious English family, must needs build a palace for his bride at a cost of £80,000. This must be squeezed out of the tenants;

and the squeeze came from a harsh agent and in a very bad season—*Hinc illæ lachrymæ.*”

“But surely Kerry is not owned by a single landlord?”

“No; but some of the other landlords—or their agents, anyway—were harsher still. I knew an agent who extorted upon each lease £10 glove-money to his wife; and who, when he brought down some friends to shoot in the season, thrust the schoolmaster and his children out of the shooting lodge into the stables, and threatened to thrust them out of the stables into the road because the cries of the shivering children disturbed his horses at night.”

“Good Lord!”

“Yes, that is absolutely true; and under another agent a wretched boy was thrust out of a house on a bitter winter’s night to die of exposure on the roadside, because no tenant

was allowed to take in a lodger upon pain of eviction."

"But why in the name of the devil don't they shoot the right men? Look at that shocking Curtin case!"

"The Curtin case was a family quarrel, pure and simple, and Irish family feuds are ferocious. Family feuds were always and everywhere ferocious in the good old times, and Ireland hasn't emerged from the good old times yet. There was plenty of moonlighting in the good old times in England, only they called it then 'taking to the road!'"

"Do you mean that moonlighting is mere robbery?"

"I think it has come down to that now. A lot of blackguards take advantage of the perfectly natural and justifiable hatred the peasantry have of the law to commit these outrages with impunity."

"The people won't help the police?"

“They wouldn’t help the police even to come to their own help. They hate so much the whole system of law and police, as an organised and authorised system of brigandage, that they wouldn’t stir foot or finger to help them to put down these unauthorised brigands.”

“Surely the people who are moonlighted wouldn’t be so particular about the stick with which to beat the dog?”

“They’re between the devil and the deep sea. The law and police are so unpopular that they daren’t have them on their side; and this those moonlighting corner-boys take advantage of. I fancy that for one moonlighting outrage you hear of there are three committed without extorting an audible cry or groan from the victims. It’s a horrible state of things; but only those who have made law and order detestable are answerable for it.”

CHAPTER VII.

MURDER !

SHIELA and Dick, returning home through the skirts of Dunran Wood at dusk one evening, were talking together of the moonlighting outrages, now of almost weekly recurrence, when Dick exclaimed, "Halloa ! What are those fellows up to ?"

"Where ?"

"There !" pointing to a group of four or five men who were making their way cautiously through the wood.

"They're only taking a short cut," Shiela suggested, through fear of Dick dogging them.

“They’ve no business in our place,” Dick exclaimed excitedly, as he proceeded to pursue them.

“Oh, Dick, don’t, don’t; pray don’t!” Shiela urged, seizing him by the arm.

“Nonsense, Shiela: there’s nothing to fear.”

“They’re Moonlighters! You mustn’t go, Dick; you *mustn’t*!” Shiela cried, very much more unnerved than she would have been before her accident.

“I shall not interfere with them, only see what they’re up to. Let go, Shiela!”

“Then, I’ll go with you,” she said decidedly.

“Oh, nonsense!”

However, as she was as resolute to accompany him as he was to pursue the men, he had to give way upon this point.

When they had got deep into the wood they could hardly at first see a step before

them ; and even after their eyes had grown more accustomed to the darkness, they lost the path and stumbled about over fallen logs and tangled brushwood. Presently Dick whispered, "Hush ! Here they are !" and then he added, as one of the men struck a match and showed a blackened face and muffled form, "*They are Moon-lighters !*"

They stood quite still, while the men passed within a few feet of them, Shiela clinging convulsively to Dick, more in fear of his interfering with these desperadoes than in terror for herself.

But her fears found another channel when Dick said suddenly, "They're making for our house ! We must hurry back."

"But it's not the way," faltered Shiela.

"It's the way they would take, and there's no other house in this direction."

After stumbling and straying a little,

Shiela recognised a giant elm they fell against, from which a short direct path would lead them out of the wood on the far side from their house, and a longer and more tortuous path would lead them out of it towards Cahircalla.

“Shiela, you must go for the police,” Dick said excitedly. “You’re not afraid?”

“No, but you—”

“I must get to the house before them. There’s not a moment to lose. You get out that way. It’s not more than a mile to the barracks. I’ll hurry home this way and have the house barricaded.”

“Oh, but, Dick, if they should—”

“There isn’t a moment to lose!” he cried, with a stamp of his foot. “Everything depends upon your hurrying up the police.” And then, after she had run a dozen paces, he cried out to her, “Stay at

the barracks ; you can do no good, and will only be in the way."

This unfortunate exhortation was shouted loud enough to be heard by a man who had been set as a sentinel at this end and exit of the wood. He crouched down to let Shiela pass him and get into the high road, and then he followed her stealthily for some three hundred yards before he ventured to overtake and intercept her, fearing that her screams might recall her brother.

"Hould an!" he cried, seizing her by the arm. "Where are ye aff to in such a hurry?"

"Let me go! How dare you?" Shiela cried breathlessly, her anger at the brute's brutality overpowering her fear.

"Look at here, now, miss; if ye shtir a fut, or let a shcream out of ye, by God! I'll brain ye!"

"Help! Help!" screamed Shiela at the

top of her voice, and as the ruffian let go her arm to club his gun to strike her down, she fled with the wings of terror almost into the arms of Dundas. He had just set out upon his usual nightly stroll towards Cahircalla to smoke a cigar and to indulge in day-dreams of Shiela. Dark as it now was she knew at once it was he, and felt suddenly and utterly secure. He put her gently behind him with one hand, while with the other, tightly clenched, he struck the man, who had too much way on to stop, a blow that felled him with the double force of Dundas's arm and of the impetus of his own speed.

"The infernal scoundrel!" he cried with an uncontrollable fury surprising in him, as he spurned the fellow's carcase with his foot. Then, with a sudden change to yearning tenderness in his tone, he turned to ask Shiela, "You're not hurt?"

“No, thank you. Thank you so much. He tried to stop me. I was going for the police,” Shiela gasped breathlessly.

“For the police?”

“Yes ; the Moonlighters are at our house.”

“But how did you — there’s not a moment to lose, though—you must stay in my cottage, while I send Dunscombe for the police. I suppose this is loaded,” he added, stooping to pick up the gun which had dropped from the man’s hands as he fell. “When I have seen you to the cottage, I shall hurry to your house,” he said, when he had picked up the gun. Then he turned to hasten back to the cottage.

“Would you mind taking my arm?” he asked presently, and with an almost tremulous timidity. “You must be quite exhausted.”

“ Oh, no ; I am all right, thank you,” she answered, taking his arm nevertheless.

“ But how did you get through them ? ” he asked, being quite prepared to hear of another heroic exploit of hers.

“ My brother and I followed them into Dunian Wood, thinking them poachers ; and when we saw they were Moonlighters going to our house, he hurried home, and I went for the police. That man must have seen and heard us, and then followed to stop me.”

“ Did the scoundrel touch you ? ”

“ He caught me by the arm, but let me go, when I screamed, to club his gun.”

Dundas ground an imprecation between his teeth.

Presently she suggested timidly, as they neared the cottage, “ Don’t you think it

would be better if you went with the police ? ”

“ Why ? It might be too late. There isn't a moment to lose.”

She made no further suggestion or remonstrance, as they had now reached the cottage. Dundas, having despatched Dunscombe for the police, and consigned Shiela to the care of his housekeeper, made all haste himself to Cahircalla. When he reached the spot where the insensible body of the man had lain, there was no trace of it ! Whether he had so far come to himself as to be able to crawl away into the next field in spite of a blow that might have stunned an ox ; or whether some sympathising neighbours had conveyed him away—he was gone ! Dundas, however, did not waste any time or thought upon the fellow as he ran at his utmost speed towards Cahircalla.

When he reached the house, he stole round it to reconnoitre, and, if possible, to take the Moonlighters in the rear ; in which case, he flattered himself that he could dispose of two, if not three of them, with the gun clubbed. But there was not the slightest sound, or sign, or trace of their presence. The house was buried in profound stillness, while through one of the upper windows he could see a housemaid going tranquilly about her work. Beyond a doubt the attack had not been made yet. As, however, Dick was sure to have reached home by this, Dundas felt that he would be spared the unpleasantness of a long explanation with his violent-tempered and pig-headed parent. Accordingly, he rang the bell, and asked the servant, who appeared promptly and primly, without the slightest sign of excitement, if Mr. Richard Fitzgerald were at home.

“ I’ll see, sir,” she said. “ Would you walk in ? ”

He was shown into the empty drawing-room, where the maid almost immediately reappeared to say : “ He’s not at home, sir ; but we expect him and Miss Shiela directly ; if you would wait—”

“ Not at home ! Could I see Mr. Fitzgerald for a moment—on very pressing business.”

“ I’ll see, sir. What name did you say ? ”

He had not given his name, and he thought it would save time to remain still anonymous.

“ Say a messenger from Miss Fitzgerald.”

“ Miss Shiela, sir ! there’s nothing—”

“ No, no ; she’s quite safe ; but I must see her father at once,” Dundas replied impatiently.

In another minute Ralph Fitzgerald

hurried into the room, only to be brought up abruptly at sight of Dundas.

“Mr. Dundas!” he exclaimed in a tone of by no means joyous surprise.

“Your son has not returned?” Dundas asked with an anxiety which alarmed Ralph out of all thought of the unwelcomeness of his visitor.

“No; has — has anything happened?” he stammered.

Dundas explained matters in as few words as possible.

“Good God! they have murdered him!” Ralph exclaimed, plainly without having given Shiela’s danger and escape a single thought.

“No, no; why should they? They would gain nothing by that. He has probably found that they were making for some other house and has followed them there. If they were making for this, they would have been here long since.”

“What’s to be done? What’s to be done?” reiterated Ralph, distractedly.

“It is possible,” said Dundas, after a moment’s thought, “that he has stolen upon them while in consultation and has waited to overhear their plans. If so, he’ll be here soon.”

“But if they caught him?”

“If they had, they’d have been here by this,” Dundas answered not very logically. “I mean they’d have been certain to come then, when the house was defenceless.”

“I don’t know what to do,” Ralph cried helplessly.

“If you will barricade the house till the police come, I shall search the wood,” Dundas suggested.

“I shall go with you,” Ralph exclaimed eagerly.

“No, no ; there’s Mrs. Fitzgerald to pro-

tect, and the house to make secure. Have you got a dark lantern ? ”

“ Yes, I think so. There’s Patsey ; you might take Patsey ; he knows every inch of the wood—only, it’s as likely as not, he’s in with the scoundrels.”

“ In that case, you’d best post Patsey in the coal-cellar and lock him in. Can I have the lantern ? ”

Dundas’s cool, commanding manner had a mesmeric effect upon Ralph, as, indeed, it usually had in hours of danger upon everyone brought under its influence. Ralph, for instance, after he had procured the lantern, took his orders from him about the barricading of the house with childlike docility.

“ You’ll come back here ? ” he asked appealingly, when Dundas had concluded his tactical lecture.

“ Yes ; when I have thoroughly searched the wood,” he answered as he tried the light

of the lantern by flashing it down the dark passage leading from the hall to the top of the kitchen stairs. Darkening it again, he set out upon a quest from which he did not hope very much more than that it would tranquillise Shiela's father's doting anxiety about his son. However, he feared as little as he hoped from it, though he had left the captured gun behind him, because Ralph had only two light fowling-pieces, and because the clumsy weapon would but impede his progress and his search through the wood.

A few minutes later, our friend, the sergeant, accompanied by a single constable, arrived. By an odd coincidence this was the third moonlighting alarm the police had had that night, and, therefore, no greater force could be spared to Cahircalla from the barracks than these two. When Sergeant Casey—a mule-headed officer with a good

deal of that sordid and short-sighted cleverness which is the whole stock-in-trade of second-class attorneys and detectives—heard of Dundas's amateur policemenanship, he shook his sage head.

“He's mixed up with them himself and has just gone to warn 'em. Isn't he hand and glove with Claughessy and his like? He's just gone to give 'em ‘the office,’ and nothing else,” he pronounced dogmatically. He would then have proceeded to give for the hundredth time, his indignant and detailed account of Dundas's rebellious contempt for law and order as impersonated by him—the sergeant—when Ralph interrupted him to urge that either he or the constable, or both, should hurry to his son's rescue.

“He's unarmed,” he pleaded, referring to Dundas, “he left that fellow's gun with me.”

“I thought so,” rejoined the sergeant
L

triumphantly. "*He's* nothing to fear from them."

Perhaps the knowledge that this murderous American rowdy was unarmed had something to do with the sergeant's offer to search the wood, which he felt sure would, before this, have been vacated by the Moonlighters. Certainly, the dread that Dundas's courage and promptitude would be contrasted by the papers, and perhaps by his officers, with his own secure supineness (if he stayed to garrison Cahircalla), had a good deal to do with his volunteering to go alone on this search expedition, leaving the other constable to guard the house.

Let us now return for a moment to Dick. Having despatched Shiela for the police, he stole along the narrow and tortuous path towards Cahircalla, stopping to listen when he had stumbled or had crunched a dead stick under his foot. When he was about

half way through the wood he so stopped, after a stumble which had flung him headlong with a crash into some brushwood, and he then thought he heard a voice whisper—"Whisht!" He stood stockstill, after he had recovered himself, to listen with suspended breath for nearly a minute. But there was no stir or sound of any kind to break the profound stillness. As he could not persuade himself that he had merely imagined this whispered "Whisht!" he proceeded with redoubled stealth and caution—an unfortunate mistake. If he had made boldly through the wood the men would not have meddled with him. They could not have recognised him, and they would not, therefore, have suspected of espionage an unknown man who was forcing his way carelessly and noisily through the underwood. Now, however, Dick's extreme care and caution in stealing his way left men

with a guilty conscience in no doubt whatever that he was dogging them down. Accordingly they waited until he had crept a few paces farther, which brought him within arm's length of the leader of the band, who dealt him a crushing blow with a bludgeon on the back of the head. Dick dropped like a stone.

“Begorra, Mick, you’ve finished him!” cried one of the men in a horrified tone.

“Is it a peeler?” whispered another.

Mick made no answer for a moment or two, as he had knelt down beside Dick to feel if his heart beat. “He’s all right,” he said then in a tone of great relief. “He’s not goin’ yet—I’ve only given him a sleepin’ dose that’ll keep him quiet a bit.”

“Is it a peeler?” again asked the other man.

“No; it’s only young Fitzgerald, I’m thinkin’.”

The first speaker made a sucking noise with his tongue against the roof of his mouth, expressive of shocked dismay.

“There’ll be the divil an’ all to pay!” he said.

“We’re not goin’ to pay it anyway,” Mick answered philosophically. “Come on, boys, out of this.”

Accordingly they hurried away, leaving Dick to take his own time—a good long time—to recover from his “sleeping dose.” When he did at last come to, it was so slowly that fully five minutes elapsed before he could confusedly recall where he was and what had happened. He then sat up with extreme caution, in part, because at the slightest movement a tossing sea of pain seemed to surge up on all sides in his brain; and in part because he feared that his assailants might still be near. Having no idea that he had been nearly an hour insensible,

or indeed more than a few moments, he dreaded to recall, by the least movement or sound, the Moonlighters to finish their work upon him. Having sat up thus for a little, listening, as far as the stupefying throbbing of his brain would allow him, for the slightest sound, he lay down again for relief and rest, closed his eyes, and sank half way back into insensibility. Out of this semi-conscious state he was thoroughly roused by three sharp revolver reports fired almost like a volley, which seemed in the stillness of the night to have been discharged at his very ear. He sprang up again into a sitting posture to listen, but the most profound silence had closed over the reports. Having sat thus listening breathlessly for a few minutes without hearing another sound of any sort, he struggled to his feet, and staggered unsteadily, groping his way from tree to tree, as noiselessly as he could.

Presently he saw a light in the distance, towards which he made with increased caution. When at last he had crept so near it that no tree obstructed his view, he saw a man kneeling beside the prostrate body of a policeman, busy opening his tunic, vest and shirt, evidently to examine a wound. Having examined it carefully by the light of a lamp he held in his hand, he rose to his feet, disclosing to Dick the face of Dundas. Dick, being of his father's suspicious temperament, detesting Dundas, and remembering his recent relations with the police, felt a sudden conviction that he had murdered the man at his feet. If he had, what scruple would he feel in murdering him—Dick—also, as the sole witness that could be produced against him? Dick was thoroughly unnerved, as well he might be, by the blow which had knocked him insensible, but in his stoutest moments he would have thought

once, twice, or thrice before running a risk of this kind. As the thought of it occurred to him, he shrank back behind the nearest tree, and watched Dundas's movements from this covert. He saw him stoop to pick up a revolver which lay at his feet, put it in his pocket, throw the light of the lantern all round to search with his keen eye every inch of the ground, and then turn in a direction at right angles to Dick's road home. Having given him time to get well out of his way, Dick made all the haste home he could. As he went he wondered whether it could have been Dundas who had dealt him that treacherous blow, but this idea he presently put aside as incredible, and in discarding it he was led for a moment to doubt Dundas's murder of the policeman. Was it not more probable that the murderer was the man who had bludgeoned him, and that Dundas had been, like himself, attracted to the spot

by the report of the revolver? But, again, what had brought the police into the wood? Had Shiela had time to send them? If so, Dick must have been so long insensible that the ruffian who had bludgeoned him would certainly not have been found still in the wood. By the time Dick had reached this point in his slowly worked out reasonings he found himself in sight of the house, which, with all its windows barred and barricaded, looked ominously black. Had the Moonlighters already visited it and perhaps slaughtered the whole household? Even this wholesale horror seemed possible to Dick in his unnerved state. On approaching the house cautiously, however, he was reassured by seeing here and there lights filtered through gaps or slits of the shutters, and when he reached the door the unmistakable policeman's tramp back and forwards in the hall emboldened him to knock loudly.

Before the constable could challenge Dick, his father, recognising his knock, had rushed to the door, which he unbarred and unlocked with tremulous hands.

“ Dick, what has happened ? ” he exclaimed at sight of Dick’s deadly white face.

“ I got a knock on the head,” Dick answered, as he seated himself upon the nearest hall chair. “ Get me a drop of whisky. Has Shiela returned ? ”

“ No ; she’s had a narrow escape of being brained, too, and is at that man Dundas’s house. Didn’t you—”

“ Dundas ! I say,” Dick cried, turning to the constable, “ there’s one of your men murdered in the wood.”

“ Sergeant Casey ! ” exclaimed the constable.

“ I don’t know who it is. I heard a shot, and made for the place it came from, and

saw Dundas kneeling beside the body examining the wound."

"By God! he has murdered him!" cried the constable.

"Someone has murdered him anyway. When I've got myself together I'll show you where he lies."

"You're not fit to go back," his father urged timorously.

"Oh, I'll be all right when I've had a drop of whisky."

When his father had hurried away to get some whisky, Dick asked the constable — "Those scoundrels haven't been here?"

"No, sir, nor won't come now, I'm thinkin'. I suppose he's dead intirely, sir?"

"I'm afraid so."

"Think of that now; he seen it comin', he did so."

"Mother, I wish you'd send at once for

Shiela," Dick cried as Mrs. Fitzgerald hurried towards him.

"Yes, yes, dear. Where was it? Was it a blow or—or a wound?" she asked, for she could not bring herself to say a bullet wound.

"It was a blow from behind. There, that will do, mother. Patsey could bring her home in the brougham."

"Yes, dear; he can call for her coming back from the doctor's. We must have Dr. Cullinan, Ralph," she said almost defiantly to her husband, who had returned with some whisky and water.

"Very well, very well," he answered impatiently; though in his heart he was glad of her determination to send for the offending doctor. Dick also was glad of it, for upon drinking the spirits and water, the intolerable pain in the head, which his excitement about the sergeant's murder had

abated, returned in redoubled force and fierceness. As, however, he adhered, in spite of the remonstrances of both parents, to his resolve to show the constable where the sergeant's body lay, the three set out together, for Mr. Fitzgerald would not allow Dick in his present state out of his sight for a moment. They might have had some scruple in leaving the house defenceless if Dick had not discovered, to his own great astonishment, that it was now more than an hour and a half since he had been felled in the wood.

"By Jove," he cried, "I was a whole hour at least lying like a log there! They must have thought they'd done for me and bolted at once."

"Then who shot the sergeant?" asked his father.

"It wasn't thim," the constable answered, grimly and significantly.

“It couldn’t have been,” said Dick. “They’d not wait an hour loafing about the wood after a job like that.”

“It wasn’t *thim*,” reiterated Brady, with vindictive emphasis.

There followed a significant silence, which was unbroken till they neared the spot where the murdered man lay.

“There’s a light!” exclaimed the constable, instantaneously darkening his own lantern. All three instinctively stopped, and then crept onwards with extreme caution. When they came in sight of the murdered man they saw Dundas by the light of the lantern, which was set upon the ground, draw out the sergeant’s revolver from his belt and deliberately discharge it twice into the air.

“That’s his defince!” Brady whispered hoarsely, “that the sergeant fired first. That’s his game! Ye seen it for yerselves.”

Certainly it looked like it. Having discharged the revolver, he looked searchingly all around, as though to make sure that he was unobserved, and then he perceived Ralph, Dick, and Brady advancing together towards him.

“Halloa!” he cried, without seeming to be in the least disconcerted. “The sergeant has been murdered.”

“Ay, he’s been murthered, and who’s done it?” Brady growled savagely.

Dundas turned upon him a look that cowed him. “You’ve been drinking, my man, instead of attending to your duty, which might have prevented this.”

“He was on duty in my house, and is perfectly sober,” Ralph cried defiantly.

“Oh, it’s from you he’s taken his tone,” Dundas answered, looking down upon Ralph with surprised scorn.

“He wants to know, as I want to know,

who has done this deed?" Ralph retorted, in a tone which charged Dundas with the murder.

Dundas looked from one to the other with such supreme scorn in his expression that only the stolid constable was unshaken in his suspicion by it.

"I shall leave you to find it out for your selves, then," he said, turning to walk away quietly.

"Halloa, stop!" cried the constable.

"Yes," Dundas answered, turning round so sharply and fiercely upon him, that Brady, instead of arresting him upon the charge as he had intended, stammered only—

"You've got the sergeant's revolver."

Dundas, who had forgotten that he still held it in his hand, tossed it to the man's feet, and without another word stalked away.

“I was thinkin’ I ought to wait for a warrant from your worship,” the constable said apologetically, turning to Ralph as a magistrate, for he feared he had shown the white feather too plainly.

“I don’t know what to think,” Ralph replied doubtfully.

Dick, who had meanwhile picked up and examined the sergeant’s revolver, observed significantly—

“There are only the two chambers discharged.”

“He didn’t give him a chance — not the ghosht of a chance,” Brady said, looking down upon the dead sergeant pitifully. “But he’d have shtood to it that it was a fair fight in self-defence if we hadn’t seen him fire that off twice himself.”

“I tell you what,” cried Dick, “his own revolver must have been an American six-

shooter, and if the bullets in the body fit it the case is proved.”

“Ah, if Misther Tamplin had only allowed poor Casey to take it aff him, he’d be livin’ yet. It was it that made thim holes in him, as he knew well it would. He says to me wan day, whin he was showin’ me thim quare kind of American carthridges he found in his house, he says—”

“You’ve got the cartridges!” Dick exclaimed. “That will settle it one way or the other.”

CHAPTER VIII.

WE MUST FIND THE MAN.

So absorbed was Mrs. Fitzgerald in thought and care of her idolised son, that she absolutely forgot to bid Patsey call for her unregarded daughter on his way back from the doctor's. Accordingly, Dundas found Shiela still in Quarry Cottage on his return from Cahircalla. During those two hours of agonised suspense, Shiela had never ceased to reproach herself for not having returned home to share the dangers of the household and to be of what service or comfort she could to her people.

On Dundas's appearance she sprang up

eagerly to look the questions she dared not ask.

“They’re all right,” he hastened to say with a reassuring smile. “Your house was not attacked at all.”

“There’s something wrong?” she insisted, for she had read this in his clouded face before he had smiled to reassure her.

“A police-sergeant has been murdered in the wood,” he answered gravely.

“Oh!” she exclaimed in a long breath of horror. “Is Dick—my brother—did you see him?”

“Yes; he’s quite safe.”

Shiela drew a long breath of relief. “It must have been those men,” she said presently.

“You wouldn’t suspect me of it?” he asked, smiling down upon her with a wistful and almost yearning look in his grey eyes, which haunted her afterwards for many a day.

“You !” she exclaimed.

“Yes ; your father and brother do.”

“Suspect you of murder !”

He nodded lightly enough, but his eyes searched her face appealingly.

“There’s some mistake,” she stammered.

“Not about their suspecting me. Your father charged me with it almost expressly.”

“He couldn’t have meant it. You must be mistaken,” she said, with a vehemence which really indicated that she was trying to convince herself quite as much as Dundas that her father was incapable of so monstrous a suspicion.

“Yes, he meant it ; but I don’t want *you* to believe it.” Nothing could be more commonplace than the words, but the accompanying tone and look said as plainly as words, “only that matters.”

In answer she only shook her head decidedly, with lowered eyes and blushing face.

“ May I see you home ? ” he asked after a slight pause. “ It sounds inhospitable ; but they will be more anxious now than ever to have you safe back.”

“ I owe it to you—my safety and my life to you,” she murmured. “ I cannot but think you have misjudged my father.”

“ Well, you’ll soon know who has been misjudged,” he answered with a sigh, as they quitted the cottage together.

After a silence of some seconds he began with the courage of the darkness :

“ I do not know when I may see you again—or at least be allowed to speak to you—and this must be my excuse for apologising now for my—my insolent presumption that day—I mean after your accident—when I said—” here he paused for a moment, and then corrected himself—“ when I offered to carry you down to the carriage.”

“ I was quite well able to walk,” she said

in a low voice which told him that she knew for what he was really apologising.

“ I had been living like a savage among savages for years, and had got into their brutal ways, I did not know how deeply until that day. But I have expiated it since, I assure you. I never regretted anything so bitterly.”

From another this would have sounded an absurdly and insincerely disproportionate apology ; but his quiet, strong, intense way of speaking left Shiela in no doubt that he meant rather more than less than he said.

As she made no immediate answer, he added—

“ I know I ought to apologise even for my apology ; but I could not bear you to go on thinking me so foolishly and insolently presumptuous, and this was my only chance to say that you could not have been more disgusted with me than I was with myself. I

shall not now be allowed another chance," he added tremulously.

Here Shiela stumbled over a stone in the steep and rugged path and in the black darkness.

"Will you take my arm?" he asked in a tone of diffident entreaty.

She took it at once, and he could feel the hand she laid within his arm tremble.

"My father cannot go on thinking this horrible thing, even if he thinks it now," she said.

"But he could not think it now, if he was not so desperately prejudiced against me politically; and that prejudice will remain. I declare I should not have had the heart to come back, if I had had an idea of the embittered state of this country; and I should return to-morrow to the States but for—"

Here he paused upon the very brink—as

he considered it—of repeating the presumption for which he had just apologised.

Perhaps Shiela understood him, for she made all haste away from the subject.

“ Did they take that man up ? ” she asked, pertinently enough ; for they were now at the spot where her assailant had been knocked down by Dundas.

“ He took himself up ; or someone shovelled him out of the road ; for he was gone when I passed here on the way to your house. The other side will put *him* down to my account—fairly enough, though.”

“ Do you mean—do you think,” Shiela cried, half stopping in her excitement, “ that they will try to shoot you for that ? ”

“ Pooh ! no ; not they—I never thought of such a thing.”

But the idea so took hold of her imagination that she quickened her pace unconsciously, glancing fearfully as she did so at

each side of the road—though she could not see a foot before her.

“You’ll have to come back this way alone,” she said.

The anxiety in her tone thrilled him through. As he knew that she was not at all given to foolish fears, or to the foolish expression of them, he could set down the terror of her tone only to an interest in him that he had not dared to hope for.

“There’s not the very slightest fear of anything of the sort—not the very slightest, really,” he reiterated earnestly.

Whereupon she became ashamed of her betrayal of anxiety, as though it were a betrayal of herself. “I’m afraid my nerves have got rather a shake to-night,” she said in her usual tone, “but it *is* a lonely road.”

“I’ve got used to it. I’ve smoked my evening cigar along it every night since—since I called that evening of the accident to

ask how you were, and was threatened by your father to be given in charge for trespassing!" he said, laughing.

"Was it for that you came?" Shiela asked nervously.

"Yes, and I've never missed an evening since, though I dared not trespass again," he said with a laugh, followed by a sigh. As she remained silent—not certainly from any sense of offence—he ventured to add—"It was well worth while for to-night's sake."

"I have not even thanked you," she said.

"Well worth while for me, I meant, of course," he hastened to explain. "Anyone who had the good fortune to meet you at the moment would have been of the same service. You cannot fancy anyone *not* doing it; can you? That will show you how small and commonplace a thing it was to do."

"At least I can fancy many who couldn't do it. He was a very powerful man," Shiela

answered, for no one could appreciate more highly than she Dundas's iron strength and nerve.

“He knocked himself down really by the force of his rush against my fist. No ; it was a piece of great good fortune for me ; and I wanted it. I was beginning to despair of seeing you ; and even if I had seen you under other circumstances, you would have cut me.”

As she could not deny that she would at least have been inclined to cut him, she remained silent—an instance of honesty which deeply intensified his admiration.

“When you cut me in future—as you must—I shall know that it is not because you misjudge me.”

“They cannot ask me. I owe you too much. I cannot do it,” she stammered in great agitation.

“Do not put it on that ground,” he

pleaded earnestly. "You owe me nothing—nothing really—except to believe that I have never done anything to deserve your contempt."

"Oh!" she exclaimed in a tone which expressed that to think otherwise was not now possible to her.

"I never did, even before I knew you; and I never could since," he said with a deliberate earnestness which showed that he was speaking the mere and bare truth—in spite of the hollow ring of compliment which the words, otherwise uttered, would have suggested.

In truth, it seemed to him—and to her also, I must confess—that they had known each other for a very long time!

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial,
We should count time by heart-throbs."

There was some moments' silence before he said in a quiet tone of resolution and of confidence—"I shall live all this senseless prejudice down;" and then, after a slight pause, he asked, in a low voice thrilling with feeling—"We shall be friends till then?" taking her hand in his.

"Yes," she answered, tremulously, slightly returning the pressure.

At this moment the lights of a carriage came in sight, and as it neared them Shiela cried—"It is ours! There's something the matter!"

"No, no; they've only sent it for you," he answered, reassuringly, for in her unnerved state she was quick to fancy all kinds of disasters. He hailed the driver (who was the lodge-keeper, Patsey being otherwise engaged), and he pulled up on recognising Shiela, while at the same moment the doctor put his head out of the carriage window.

“Halloa! I thought you were in jail!” he cried to Dundas. “Has an angel bailed you out, like St. Peter?” glancing at Shiela. “I was just going to fetch you, Miss Shiela. Come in, both of ye. Come along,” he said to Dundas, who hesitated. “I shall have the carriage disinfected to-morrow after you—not with sulphur, though—that would be homeopathic.”

When they had got in, the doctor shouted to the driver — “Take your time going back.”

“I will, surr; I will,” and he certainly did.

“Well, so you murdered the sergeant?” the doctor said, when he had drawn in his head after having given the driver this direction. “By the way, your brother will be all right in a week, Miss Shiela.”

“Dick!” she cried, glancing almost reproachfully at Dundas.

“Didn’t he tell you?” asked the doctor, whose quick eye had noticed her look. “Perhaps it was he who had knocked him on the head, as he seems to have been running a-muck to-night.”

“Is he much hurt?” Shiela asked anxiously.

“He got a very hard knock, but on a very hard head—the blow of a ram on a ram’s skull. He’ll be all right in a few days.”

“They attacked the house after all?” asked Dundas.

“Not they. He got it three hours ago in the wood, and lay there insensible for an hour or more; but he woke up in time to see you make sure that you had done for the sergeant. I declare the police and magistrates of this country would believe anything of anyone who was not a Coercionist!” the doctor exclaimed indignantly.

“What kept them all that time in the wood? Poaching?” Dundas asked perplexedly.

“No; there’s nothing there to poach—not a rabbit, even. Besides, they’d certainly bolt after knocking him on the head, whether they thought they’d murdered him or only stunned him. They’d be afraid of a hue and cry in the one case, and of himself coming to and giving the alarm in the other. I can’t make it out. You saw no signs of them?”

“I heard the revolver shots and hurried in their direction as quickly as I could through the underwood, but only found the dead body of the sergeant with my own six-shooter within a few feet of him on the ground.”

“What!” cried the doctor in a startled tone.

“It was stolen from me (by one of those

quarrymen, I guess) the day before the police came with that search-warrant."

"By the Lord!" cried the doctor in irrepressible alarm.

"You mean it will make against me?" Dundas asked in his usual cool tone.

"Did you tell them it was stolen from you?"

"The police? No. They were so outrageously insolent that I gave them all the trouble I could."

"Did you tell anyone?"

"Only Dunscombe."

There was silence for some moments while the doctor meditated gloomily upon the situation.

"Why do you suspect a quarryman?" he asked presently, in the hope of seeing light from this side.

"I took off my coat in the quarry to show the men how to lift a stone on to the

trolly, which two of them were boggling over, and I think it must have been taken out of my pocket then."

"Then you asked them about it?"

"No; I didn't miss it for hours after, and I couldn't be sure it was one of them stole it. I might have dropped it out of my pocket when I took off my coat: though I don't think I did."

"Nor I," rejoined the doctor, dryly. "Well, there's Dunscombe anyway," he added, in an "I-like-not-the-security" tone.

"You don't think his word will go for much?" asked Dundas, rather humorously than anxiously.

"Not in this country. In this country you can get any kind of affidavit, oath, or alibi you need—against the Crown—as cheap as a moonlighter's mask."

"By George! It looks serious!" Dundas said, after a pause.

“We must find the man who did it,” the doctor pronounced decisively. “The police won’t. They never do, to begin with. They find the men who didn’t do it every other day ; but the real culprit, hardly ever. In fact, they are only soldiers in green, and are as fit for running down a criminal as a bulldog is fit for running down a fox. But, besides, in your case they won’t want to find anyone else.”

“What !”

“Oh, well, I don’t mean that they would hold on to you, if they knew you to be the wrong man ; but, of course, the wish is father to the thought with them as with most people ; and you’ve got rather deep into their black books.”

“So that they’ll not even try to find the man !”

“They’ll want a bit of driving in that direction—and they’ll get it.”

“It’s a very ugly business,” Dundas said, after a silence of some moments. “I hadn’t the least idea how serious it was.”

“It will give you a lot of trouble and annoyance ; but it will come right in the end, never fear. Now, there’s—”

“I declare,” broke in Dundas, who had not been listening to the doctor’s cold comfort—“I declare I can hardly blame them myself ; for it’s about as strong a circumstantial case against me as my worst enemy could wish for !”

“We must find the right man,” reiterated the doctor.

Here the carriage pulled up at the avenue gate, and Dundas got out.

“Walk slowly ; I shall overtake you in two minutes, when I have delivered Miss Shiela safe and sound.”

Shiela, who had also come to realise Dundas’s terrible position, kept the hand he

held out to her for an appreciable time, and gave it an appreciable pressure. Her whole heart went out to the man in his great trouble.

CHAPTER IX.

COMMITTED FOR TRIAL.

THE doctor did not overtake Dundas, as he had promised and intended. When he reached the house he found that the body of the murdered sergeant had just been brought into it upon a shutter by four men, and he had to go through the form of examining it to make sure that not a spark of life was unextinguished.

“Death was instantaneous,” he pronounced after this examination, “and would have been instantaneous if he had had a dozen lives. Almost a volley of bullets has been fired point blank into his heart.”

"The bullets are there?" asked Ralph.

"Yes; there's not much doubt about that."

"*They'll* hang him," growled Brady.

"They'll not help you much, as the revolver was stolen and was left on the ground," the doctor said, quietly.

"How do you know?" asked Ralph, sharply.

"From Mr. Dundas. He picked it up and found it to be one that was stolen from him some days since."

"That bates all!" cried Brady, slapping his thigh with his hand; while Ralph was not less scornfully impressed by the puerility and transparency of this preposterous story.

"I'll make out a warrant for his immediate arrest," he said, decidedly. "Tell Patsey not to unharness the horse," he cried to a maid in the background, who was crossing herself and muttering pious ejacula-

tions at sight of the corpse. Turning then to Brady, he said—"He'll drive you to the barracks, where you can get a couple of men to make an immediate arrest. There's not a moment to be lost with a man like that—not a moment!"

Thus the result of the doctor's well-intentioned intervention was Dundas's immediate arrest and lodgment for the night in the police barracks.

Next morning the case looked blacker still against the prisoner; for information reached the barracks of a Moonlighters' raid the night before on a house which could be reached most conveniently through Dunrān Wood, and which was, it appeared, reached in or about the time that the sergeant was murdered. There could be no reasonable doubt, upon a comparison of the hours and of the scenes of the different outrages, that these Moonlighters were Dick's

assailants, but were not the murderers of Sergeant Casey.

It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that when Dundas was brought before the magistrates, and was remanded for a week for Dick's appearance, bail was decidedly refused. Indeed, the only result of applying for it was the dismissal of the doctor (because he had offered bail for Dundas to any amount within his means) for the second time by the enraged Ralph. This dismissal was a very much less serious matter to the doctor than it was to Shiela, who was thus left without anyone to whom she could speak, or from whom she could hear about a man whose great and undeserved trouble had done more for him in her heart than any of the qualities for which she admired him. Here is a striking remark of Heine's, which to me seems even nearer the truth than Southerne's "Pity's

akin to love," or Beaumont and Fletcher's—

“Of all the paths that lead to woman's love,
Pity's the straightest ;”

or Shakespeare's—

“Violet—‘I pity you.’
Olivia—‘That's a degree to Love.’”

“To be wholly loved with the whole heart,” says Heine, “one must be suffering. Pity is the last consecration of Love, is perhaps Love itself.”

Certainly, in the case of so proud a girl as Shiela, pity was much nearer love than admiration ; while, besides, only pity could have perfectly effaced with her the first impression of presumption which Dundas had given her.

Another thing which did Dundas signal service with her was the extreme violence with which not only her father and mother,

but Dick also, spoke of him. To her parents' diatribes she never ventured a reply, knowing of how small account she was with them, and what construction they would at once put upon anything she might say in Dundas's defence. But she did venture upon a remonstrance with Dick, when he was holding forth furiously upon this "Irish-American Invincible."

"You *can't* believe he did it, Dick," she said, as she sat by his bed upon the morning after the murder.

Dick turned his head upon the pillow to stare at her, as though she had suddenly gone mad.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"He's the very last kind of man to commit a murder."

"What do you know about him?" Dick asked, half raising himself in bed, but sinking back again.

“He saved my life last night,” Shiela urged rather illogically.

“Really, Shiela, that’s the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of! Because he didn’t stand by and see you murdered—which no man not a dastardly moonlighter could have done—he is incapable of murdering a policeman whom he threatened to do for! Don’t you believe that he threatened to shoot him like a dog? Do you think the police invented that? Or do you think that I invented my story, that I didn’t almost see him murder the man?”

“You only saw him doing what you would have done yourself, if you had been before him—stooping down to see if the sergeant was dead, or only wounded.”

“Didn’t I see him take up his own revolver—it was his own revolver—and make off? Didn’t we all see him come back to fire off the sergeant’s revolver to make it

appear that the sergeant had fired first?"

"He probably thought there were other policemen in the wood, and he wanted to call their attention."

"Is that his story to you?" Dick asked, looking sharply at her.

"No; he said nothing to me about it."

"I hardly thought he could have said that, anyway; it would be too idiotic. Why didn't he fire off his own revolver, if that was what he wanted? There were three chambers still charged. Why didn't he fire off two of them, instead of two shots from the sergeant's?"

"They might not have been charged and they probably were not. The revolver was stolen from him—"

"Oh, well, if you believe that audacious cock-and-bull story, you'll believe anything,

and there's no good talking to you at all," Dick said, with supreme scorn.

"I oughtn't to talk to you at all, Dick, dear," she said, remorsefully, laying her soft, cool hand soothingly upon his fevered forehead. "I know you've a frightful headache."

Dick lay still and silent for a little, with closed eyes; but just as Shiela began to hope he was going to sleep, he suddenly exploded with—

"Stolen from him, and then found by him beside the body! It's the rottenest make-up I ever heard. Maybe the sergeant stole it to commit suicide with it, that Dundas might be hanged for his murder! Hanged he'll be, unless they shut him up in an idiot asylum."

The bitterness of Dick and his father towards Dundas was really surprising; but nothing could convince either of them that his reinstatement of Claughessy was not

meant as a personal affront to them ! Indeed his supposed Nationalist politics were considered as a personal affront by everyone in the opposite camp, and not least by Ralph and Dick Fitzgerald. It never seems to have occurred to these furious partisans that as, after all—assuming Dundas to be a Nationalist—they differed from him in politics as far as he differed from them, the offence or affront was mutual, and might therefore be cancelled at once from the debit and credit side of the account. But no ; if Dundas had resented their politics as a personal offence to himself, they would have considered him insane.

But the two Fitzgeralds were particularly embittered against him, because he had not only reinstated Claughessy, but had taken part in that celebration of his reinstatement, which was the occasion of much scurrilous

abuse being spat out upon "Ned Donegan's Donkey." His rescue of Shiela might have been reckoned as some set-off against his offences, if she had counted for much with her father, or if her rescue had counted for much with her brother. But Ralph almost ignored his daughter's existence, and Dick thought and made as little of her rescue as Dundas himself had. It was a piece of mere good fortune that anyone should have met her at that moment; but whoever had happened to meet her there and then could have done no less than Dundas. His rescue of her was therefore a happy accident, and nothing more.

This way of looking at the matter relieved Dick of any compunction in deluging Dundas with savage abuse privately, and in colouring his evidence against him in the witness-box with his own black suspicions—that is, he described Dundas's appearance

and bearing on the night and scene of the murder as those of a man confused by guilt!

But indeed it needed not Dick's black brush to make the case against Dundas look ugly. The evidence given to criminate him, when he was brought up at the week's end upon remand, was nothing less than overwhelming. First came the evidence of the police who had heard the prisoner threaten to shoot the sergeant like a dog, and who had heard the sergeant more than once say that the man, if not disarmed, would carry out his threat. The prisoner was not disarmed because he had passed his revolver to his chum, whom the police had no warrant to search. Before they could get search warrants against both, the murder had happened. It was committed with the prisoner's revolver; for the bullets extracted from the body fitted its chambers, and were, indeed, of the same size, shape, and peculiar

American make of the bullets in the cartridges which they had found in the prisoner's house. And that it was the prisoner himself who committed the crime with this revolver was proved by the evidence of Mr. Richard Fitzgerald, who saw him a few minutes after the murder, first examining the wounds of the deceased, to make sure of his death, and then hurrying away from the scene with every sign of trepidation and guilt. Nevertheless, he had returned to it on second thoughts (as was proved by the evidence of the two Messrs. Fitzgerald and Constable Brady) in order to discharge a couple of chambers of the sergeant's revolver, and so give the impression that the murder was at most a manslaughter committed upon provocation, or in self-defence.

Here was a strong case, which appeared even stronger in the light of the grotesque defence offered by the prisoner's counsel—

that the revolver had been stolen from the prisoner a few days before the murder, and was found by him beside the sergeant's corpse, and that the sergeant's revolver was discharged by him (since all the chambers of his own weapon were emptied) to call to the spot the other policemen who were probably searching the wood. There was also, indeed, the feeble suggestion faintly made by the prisoner's counsel that the sergeant's murderer belonged to the same gang as the men who had assaulted Miss Fitzgerald and struck down her brother. But, as there was no attempt to account for the infatuation which must have kept this gang in the wood inviting detection and capture for a whole hour after they had struck down young Mr. Fitzgerald almost at his own door, and as there was conclusive proof that at the moment of the murder this very gang were raiding for arms a house

three miles away, this weak suggestion was considered to be in perfect keeping with the rest of the foolish defence made for the prisoner.

As, however, it was the only defence that could be offered, it is not to be wondered at that he was committed unhesitatingly for trial on a charge of "Wilful Murder."

CHAPTER X.

A CLUE.

WHEN Shiela read Dick's evidence next morning in the newspaper she was indignant—indignant with Dick! Waiting her opportunity, she got him to herself and at once attacked him:—

“Dick, you couldn't have said what they make you say here?” producing the newspaper.

“What?” he asked in perplexity.

“This; that man asked you” (referring to the newspaper from which she read out)—

“‘Did he seem terrified?’

“‘Yes.’

“ ‘ He looked all round furtively as if he feared he was being watched ? ’

“ ‘ Yes.’

“ ‘ And then slunk away ? ’

“ ‘ Yes.’

“ ‘ He had so much the appearance of a desperate man who had just done a desperate deed that you dared not approach him ? ’

“ ‘ I was unarmed and so dizzy that I could hardly walk.’

“ ‘ Of course ; I was not impugning your courage ; but he wasn’t the kind of man or in the kind of mood from his appearance that an unarmed person could safely approach him ? ’

“ ‘ No.’ ”

Here were leading questions with a vengeance ! But indeed Dick had needed no leading.

“ Well ? ” he asked when Shiela had

looked up questioningly at him from the newspaper.

“Why, I heard you say yourself that you never saw anyone in all your life so cool!”

“That was when we found him firing off the sergeant’s revolver.”

“When he knew he was watched he was cool; but when he only feared he might be watched he was terrified and looked round furtively and slunk away!” Shiela cried with much warmth, and such a suspicion of scorn in her voice as amazed and annoyed Dick.

“Do you mean that I perjured myself?” he asked sharply.

“No, Dick, I don’t; of course I don’t. But I think you imagined him feeling and looking like that because you imagined he had committed murder.”

“Imagined it! Is there any doubt at all about it?”

“ I have no doubt at all about it. He never did it—never ! ”

“ Really, Shiela—” but here he hesitated to make an imputation which she could not easily forgive and would never forget. Perhaps she guessed what it was, for she coloured to the roots of her hair.

“ A man who could face and defy the police in a body is not the kind of man who would murder one of them without giving him a chance to defend himself,” she hastened to say in some confusion. This was not a happy allusion, as she would have felt if she had not been hurried into making it.

“ I suppose you mean when he faced and defied father at that meeting ? ” Dick asked angrily.

“ He didn’t know it was father,” rejoined Shiela, rather feebly ; adding, “ and he didn’t know that that meeting had any-

thing to do with father ; he joined it by accident."

" I suppose you got all this on the *best* authority," sneered Dick.

" Yes ; from Dr. Cullinan," she answered defiantly.

" It was quite time we had done with that—that go-between !" Dick cried with an irrepressible fury which he regretted instantly and bitterly.

Shiela rose in a stately way, her face all scorn, and quitted the room.

The only outward and visible result of this quarrel was that Dundas's name was never afterwards mentioned between brother and sister ; yet henceforth each was conscious of an estranging barrier, slight and intangible as a mist, but not less chilling and "amoving."

Now, this estrangement, though it embittered poignantly Shiela's present wretched-

ness, was in one respect a relief to her. She had not forgotten the doctor's pronouncement that Dundas could be exculpated only by "finding the right man," and to this discovery she had resolved to devote herself! It was a strange task for a young girl to set herself; but there was no one else to attempt it; and if it were not attempted it was absolutely certain that Dundas would be executed for a crime which he had not committed, which he, of all men (to her thinking), could not have committed. Now, if she and Dick had been on their old terms of childlike interconfession and intercommunion, she could not have kept this resolve of hers from him, even though she knew how it would enrage and disgust him. It was therefore a relief to her to feel, now that the subject was tabooed between them, that without any breach of the implicit covenant of an implicit mutual confidence,

she need not invite his scornful criticism and vehement opposition.

So far, then, her quarrel with Dick had cleared her way a little—but how little! Certainly a girl of less nerve, resolve, and courage than Shiela would have made the forlorn hopelessness of her enterprise an excuse to herself for abandoning it. She had virtually the whole country against her—the magistrates and police, who would resent and resist any attempt to exculpate so exemplary “a criminal” as Dundas; and the people, who would resent and resist any attempt to inculcate a Moonlighter. But Shiela was not a girl to be daunted by difficulties when there was a principle to obey, a duty to do, or a debt to pay, and here she felt there were all three. Feeling this, she felt also that she must succeed. She had a belief—how come by I cannot imagine, for she had lived all her life in

Clare—that justice was done always in the end even on earth :

“ I’m armed with more than complete steel,
The justice of my quarrel—”

a line in an old play of Day and Dekker’s (which, by the way, one might imagine to have been the original of Shakespeare’s line—

“ Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just ”) ;

and this was Shiela’s firm and fortifying faith.

From such high ground down to Patsey is a descent I admit ; yet it was from Patsey Shiela first tried to get some serviceable clue. Now, truth lay in Patsey’s face as in a well—wherein, when you looked, you saw only your own reflection. What you wished him to say that only would this faithful soul say.

“ Did you hear or see anything of those men on Thursday night, Patsey ? ” Shiela asked when she had found Patsey at last, sitting at ease in the brougham in the coach-house smoking.

“ Yes, miss; no, miss,” Patsey cried, jumping from the carriage in a confusion from which he instantly recovered. “ I was killin’ thim moths, miss, wid a whiff of baccy. Look at here, miss ! ” showing a moth-eaten hole in the cloth of the cushion opposite that he had been sitting upon.

“ It ought to be dead by this,” Shiela answered as well as she could for coughing, for the smoke was dense and pungent.

“ Oh, begorra, miss, I’ve thried iverything wid ’em,” Patsey answered in a heartbroken tone, “ till I wor dhruv at lasht to smokin’ ’em out.”

“ You’ll smoke yourself out, Patsey, if my father notices the smell. Did you

hear or see anything of those men that night?"

"Which men, miss?" Patsey asked in perplexity, while his mind, like a fox in a covert, was running about actively and cunningly to discover the direction in which it would be safest to "go away."

"The men who attacked Mr. Dick."

"Is it thim, miss? Sorra a see ive I seen 'em, the blaaguards!"

"Do you think it was they that broke into Clancy's house?"

"I wouldn't put nothin' pasht 'em—nothin'," Patsey replied oracularly, for he could not yet see what Miss Shiela wished him to say.

"They would have had time to get there, you think?"

"Sure, they wor on the run, miss, after they darkened Misther Dick."

"You mean you don't think they'd dare

to commit another outrage on the same night?"

"Begorra! they would so, miss; an' tin other."

"But did they, do you think?"

"Is it the sergeant, miss?" Patsey asked, with a swift, keen, and cunning glance at her to find his bearings.

"Do you think *they* did that?" Shiela asked eagerly.

Then did the docile Patsey see the path of duty straight before him. Had not the American gent saved Miss Shiela that night? Had they not walked and driven together to Cahircalla "as close as clover"?---to quote the lodge-keeper's report to Patsey. And had not the good-natured doctor bidden the lodge-keeper to drive home as slowly as possible for their sakes?

"Who else done it, miss?" he asked, with sudden heat. "Sure it isn't that

American gintleman—who is a gintleman, ivery inch of him—who'd dhirty powder wid that sergeant?"

"You think it was the Moonlighters?" asked Shiela, in a tone which showed Patsey her whole hand. As, however, it would not do to be quoted as having attributed the murder to the Moonlighters, Patsey discreetly replied,

"I know it warn't him annyways, miss."

"How do you know?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Ah, thin, Miss Shiela," Patsey replied, remonstratively, as though she were arguing that Dundas must have been the murderer—"Ah, thin, Miss Shiela, sure it isn't the likes of him that 'ud shoot a man widout givin' him a chance. That's a cat's courage, to spring on ye behind in the dark; but sorra a morsel of a cat there's in him, miss."

"But who did it, then, Patsey?"

Patsey looked cautiously round, as though he feared the moths in the cushions might be listening, before he ventured to whisper—

“Thim that shtole his pishtil, miss.”

“Yes, but who? Who stole it?” she asked, eagerly.

“Thim that shot him, miss; thim that shot him,” he replied, mysteriously and emphatically.

“Oh!”. she exclaimed, so impatiently that Patsey, perceiving he was overdoing his diplomacy of infantile simplicity, hastened to add, in a yet lower tone, a suggestion which he really did think of vital value—

“If ye could be afther provin’ an alibi—an alibi for the pishtil, I mane—ye’d bate ’em, miss! By God! ye would so!” he said, in a hoarse whisper, with unfeigned earnestness.

“I don’t understand,” she replied, in bewilderment.

Patsey again looked all round—this time with genuine dread of an eavesdropper—before he explained himself in a whisper—

“ Maybe he tould ye, miss, that the pishtil was shtole ? ”

“ Told me ! ”

“ He might be afther sayin’ to ye that night whin he darkined the man that wor huntin’ ye—‘ If I’d me pishtil,’ he says to you, says he, ‘ I’d have shot the blaa-guard,’ he says, says he, ‘ but wan of thim quarry chaps,’ says he, ‘ shtole it aff me yestherday,’ says he.”

“ But he never said anything of the sort,” Shiela cried, in complete bewilderment, for it could not occur to her that Patsey was putting a pretty and picturesque piece of perjury into her mouth.

“ But, sure, Miss Shiela, if he had said it, it ’ud have been the Goshpel thruth. There’s where it is ! An’ it’s hangin’ him

they'll be wid a rope of lies round his neck, because no wan 'ill shtan' up for him in the box to spake the thruth! I'd do it, meself, Miss Shiela, an' welcome—an' welcome—only sorra a worrd a poor man shwears they'll lishten to at all, at all—if it wor throe as the Thrinity."

"Do you mean that you'd swear he said to you what he never did say?"

"Begorra, I would, miss, if it wor throe."

"Patsey!"

"Ah, thin, why wouldn't I, Miss Shiela?" Patsey cried, transported out of his usual "assentator" style by his ardent zeal in the sacred cause of truth; "sorry I'd be to see an innocent man hanged by lies for want of a worrd in the witness-box wid thruth in the hearrt of it. Sure, Miss Shiela, a sound pratey wid a rotten shkin is betther nor a rotten pratey wid a shkin like an onion."

“Lying can never be right, Patsey,” Shiela answered, severely.

“To be sure it can’t, miss; an’ there niver wor a blacker lie nor thim peelers shwore that he murdered the sergeant. That’s why I make so bould as to say, miss,” Patsey added, with lowered tone and another searching look all round, “that there’s thim as ought to be got to tell the thruth in the box, that his pishtil wor stole aff him—not the likes of me, Miss Shiela; for thim lawyers thinks that sich as me can niver tell the thruth,” he said, in an aside of some bitterness; “but wan of the quality—or the docther, maybe?” looking up into her face with a sly interrogativeness.

Shiela was thoroughly and doubly disgusted with Patsey, and with herself for having condescended to consult him.

“I don’t think you know what lying is, Patsey.”

“ Me, miss ! Begor, I do, an’ well, too ! ” he cried, with a vehemence which made Shiela smile in spite of herself at certainly the biggest truth Patsey had ever told.

“ Don’t you know, then, that it would be a lie and a perjury for me, or the doctor, or anyone, to swear that Mr. Dundas told us before that night that his revolver was stolen, when he had said nothing at all to us about it ? ”

Then did Patsey, perceiving that Miss Shiela was incorrigibly dense, or particular, veer round like a weathercock moved by her breath.

“ Oh, if he’d niver said nothin’—of coorse, if he’d niver said nothin’, miss. But, sure, if it wor shtole, he’d say it wor shtole ; an’ me manin’, miss, is that thim he said it to should come forard an’ shwear it. Sorra a worrd of a lie there’d be in that, I’m thinkin’ ? ” he suggested, interrogatively,

as though Shiela might hold this to be flat perjury.

“Not in that; but I hardly understood you to mean merely that, Patsey.”

“Ah, thin, what would ye be afther thinkin’ I’d be manin’, Miss Shiela?” Patsey asked, in an injured tone. “Is it that the likes of ye’d kiss the book to a lie! Sure, I wouldn’t do it meself, miss—poor as I am, an’, God knows, I’m poor enough—let alone to ax ye to do it. But here’s where it is, Miss Shiela—if Mr. Dundas had said to ye that night: ‘It’s well for that big blaaguard that me pishtil wor shtole aff me,’ ye might shtep up into the box an’ shwear to that widout a worrd of lie—ye might so, Miss Shiela,” he cried, with an emphatic firmness which expressed that nothing she could say would shake his conviction that this was morally defensible

“ I suppose I might,” she replied, impatiently, for it was not pleasant to be taken by Patsey for a perfect idiot. “ But what did you mean by saying that ‘ a good potato with a bad skin was better than a bad potato with a good skin ? ’ ”

“ Sure, that wor only a way of shpakin’, miss.”

“ But what did you mean ? ”

“ Mane, miss ? It wor this way it wor, miss ; I wor shpakin’ of thim police shwearin’ together agin’ an innocent man that hadn’t no wan to shwear for him ; because thim that knew the differ were in dhread to come forard in regard to their being sinsible that their Bible oath wouldn’t be tuk agin’ a policeman’s worrd—that wor the way of it, miss,” Patsey cried, triumphantly. He had begun his explanation slowly, like a dog that hesitates about the scent to follow ; but, this once found, the dog is away like

the wind—as was Patsey ; for he raced through the latter part of his explanation with breathless volubility.

In spite of her keen sense of humour, Shiela's disgust with Patsey's glib and adroit lying was but very slightly tempered with amusement. It could never have occurred to her to make for him the allowance that this mendacity was the natural and almost necessary consequence of generations of abject serfdom. "To lie is to fear man, but to defy God," is a fine saying of Lysander's, which Bacon attributes to Montaigne, who but quoted it from Plutarch ; and at least nine-tenths of all the lying in the world is due directly to either physical or moral cowardice. Now, as poor Patsey's forebears for many generations had to cower and cringe, and creep, and crawl, and abase themselves to the 'very dust of the road and dung of the field before insolent

agents or landlords, in order to keep the thatch of their dog-hutches of cabins over the heads of their little children, Patsey himself had hereditarily the instincts and the faculties of a hunted creature. He was furtive, tricky, alert, and adroit. But he was loyal withal to kindly masters—so far as a weak and shifty nature can be loyal—and he worshipped Miss Shiela as much for her pluck as for her goodness and graciousness.

He was quick to perceive her disgust, as she turned impatiently away.

“Miss Shiela!” he cried, in a tone that suggested a coming communication of immense mystery and importance.

“Yes?” she answered, turning quickly round.

“Is he a great friend of yours, miss?”

“Who—Mr. Dundas?”

“Yes, miss.”

Shiela hesitated for a moment before she answered with a blush, which did not escape the observant Patsey, "Yes," for she saw that Patsey had something of extraordinary consequence to Dundas to communicate.

Patsey, having looked all round the coach-house, proceeded on tip-toe to a corner where there was a ladder-staircase leading up to a loft, into which he climbed to make absolutely sure there was no eavesdroppers. Presently descending again, he approached Shiela, still on tip-toe, and with the air of a Guy Fawkes about to apply the match.

"Miss Shiela, ye'll not tell no wan—no wan in the wide worruld, miss? "

"What? What is it, Patsey? "

"Whisht, miss. It's me life, it is, if ye tell man, woman, or mortal.'

"I'll not tell—of course not," she said breathlessly.

“Look at here, miss ; I’m as dead as the sergeant if ye shplit an me !”

“But you know I won’t, Patsey,” she answered, wrought up to a fever of suspense and expectancy. He looked well round first, and then beckoned Shiela to that part of the coach-house which was farthest from the door. When she had followed him thither he said in a hoarse whisper—

“I helped to carry the man to the house.”

“The sergeant?”

“Yes, miss ; an’ I helped to lift him on the shutter, an’ had a holt of him by the collar an’ by the right hand, an’ it wor clinched, Miss Shiela, wid—wid a morsel of cloth in it—” sinking his voice still lower. Here he paused for a moment or two before he added—“I got it open, miss, widout their noticin’ nothin’, an’ kep the bit of cloth. It wor a bit of a coat collar he’d grabbed

holt of, an' him that wore it wrinched himself loose an' shot him."

"Oh, Patsey! If you'd only left it where it was!"

"Sure, I couldn't tell thin, miss, that they'd be puttin' it an to Misther Dundas; an' I worn't goin' to have wan of the boys hanged for a peeler."

"Have you got it?"

"I have, Miss Shiela; but if I give it to ye, miss, it's me life I'm givin' into your keepin'."

"But what can I do with it, Patsey, if I'm to say nothing about it?" she asked distractedly.

"Look at here, miss," he answered with subdued excitement. "Look at here, miss; ye could find it yerself on the shpot where he wor found."

"Patsey! I couldn't. You can't understand!"

And he couldn't. Why on earth could not Miss Shiela say it was found where it was found? Who found it had nothing in life to do with the truth or import of the evidence. In this way Patsey reasoned out Miss Shiela's unreasonableness.

"But it wor found there, miss," he urged in a surprised tone.

"I know ; but I didn't find it there, and I could not say I did. Patsey, couldn't you come forward?" she said appealingly.

"'Deed, thin, I could, miss ; an' I could lep aff the cliffs of Moher," he rejoined in a tone of intensely bitter sarcasm.

"Where is it?" she asked, after a pause of distressing and distracting thought.

"Miss Shiela, you'll not te no wan?" Patsey cried in agitation.

“No ; I’ve promised—unless you let me.”

“I daren’t, miss. I daren’t. I daren’t!” he reiterated excitedly.

“I shall tell no one unless you let me, Patsey,” she repeated, and upon securing this assurance he produced from his pocket the piece of frieze, wrapped up in an old rag of chamois leather.

CHAPTER XI.

TOM D'ARCY.

DICK's estrangement from Shiela occurred at a critical time for the lad. There was a young gentleman named Tom D'Arcy—the same that the doctor had described to Dundas as “a curious customer, and as a suitor of Shiela's”—who had gained already great influence over Dick. He was a singular mixture of youth and age, for, while he had all a wild young man's lust of pleasure, of excitement, and of admiration, he had all an evil old man's cold, calculating cunning, suspicion, and unscrupulousness. For him Dick had an extravagant admiration, because D'Arcy

seemed to be "in the know," and "in the swim" of all the pursuits and pleasures dear to Dick's heart. D'Arcy, on his side, having an equally extravagant admiration for Dick's sister, was exceedingly gracious to that flattered young gentleman. He had again and again taken Dick to Limerick, and had there initiated him into all the mysteries of "pleasure." Dick, on his part, had done what he could for his friend with Shiela; who, however, was so little amenable in this matter to her brother's influence, as to maintain unshaken and undiminished her rooted repugnance to Mr. D'Arcy.

"He's not a gentleman, Dick," she said decidedly.

"Not a gentleman!" gasped her breathless brother; "why, he's hand and glove with Sir Geoffrey Jackson and was at Lord Kiltannan's wedding!"

"But they may not be gentlemen, either," Shiela retorted, mischievously and rebelliously, for it humiliated her to hear Dick echoing her mother's servile adoration of rank. However, her retort took no effect upon Dick, since he could not conceive it to be seriously meant. Ireland is at least a hundred years behind even England in its silly and superstitious worship of rank, and both Dick and his mother were more belated and benighted still in their snobbery.

"It's no good talking like that, Shiela; you know very well he's a gentleman, and goes everywhere," he replied, in an aggrieved tone.

She shook her head positively in reply.

"I don't know what you want," cried Dick.

"I want *you*, Dick," she had answered lovingly, putting her arm round his neck.

“You are always with him somewhere now.”

“If you mean Kilran races, of course I went. I always go, and should have gone whether he went or not.”

“I didn’t mean the races merely ; but you’re always with him everywhere : and I’m quite sure, Dick, he’s a bad companion,” Shiela said emphatically, in her maternal manner.

“Hang it ! Shiela, I’m not a boy, or a girl ; and I’m quite well able to take care of myself, even if he was what you think him ; but he isn’t at all. He’s a downright good fellow, and—and he’s always talking about you.”

“About me,” cried Shiela, flushing, but not with pride or pleasure. “Then, Dick, you shouldn’t let him. I hate the way he looks at me. He’s not a gentleman !” she repeated with excessive warmth.

“He’s not a gentleman! He’s not a gentleman!” echoed Dick, mimicking her. “What do you know about him? You know just nothing at all. Because he looks at you, if you please! Why shouldn’t he look at you, if he likes? A cat can look at a king, I suppose: and he can’t help his looks,” Dick cried in a boyish and incoherent rage.

“And I can’t help not liking him.”

“Did he ask you to like him? Who wants you to like him?” Dick cried, still in a white heat.

“I thought you did, Dick; but if you don’t, he’s not worth quarrelling about; is he?”

“Who began the quarrel?” growled Dick, who, when in a rage, relapsed always into schoolboyhood, as a provincial orator in a rage relapses into his native Doric. “To tell a fellow that his friend

isn't a gentleman, is like saying that he isn't a gentleman himself."

"Dick, it's just because you are not in the least like him that I cannot bear you to be so much with him."

"Pooh! What do girls know about it?"

This "what-do-girls-know-about-it" tone was a recent assumption of Dick's in his talks with Shiela, and, as he had only taken it since his intimacy with Mr. Tom D'Arcy, she naturally put it down to that gentleman's account. Something of her repugnance to Mr. D'Arcy was, no doubt, due to her sense that she owed to him her recent appreciable loss of influence with her brother, since there's a deal of human nature even in a heroine. But, besides and above this, an unerring feminine instinct repelled her from a man so gross in all his thoughts, and especially in all his thoughts about women.

And yet Mr. Tom D'Arcy had been as respectful as he knew how to be towards Shiela, whom he worshipped with such adoration as his nature was capable of. Her grace and beauty appealed to his senses—his most susceptible part—while her skill and daring as a horsewoman completed the conquest of what he was pleased to call his heart. He was himself besotted on horses, which he bought and sold and betted upon, with, according to his own account, unvarying advantage to himself. Other experts, indeed, in horseflesh, or on racecourses, asserted that D'Arcy was often and heavily “bitten” in spite of his admitted horsecraft and other craft; but he himself recounted only his successes, and backed up his boasts by the evidence of a full purse. As his father was a notorious screw, Tom could not resort to him for the refilling of a deplet-

ed purse, which therefore must have been replenished only by his successful horse-flesh bets and bargains; for Tom had no other ostensible mode of money making. And money he certainly made. When, for instance, he had heard of Shiela's heroism in saving Dick's life, he was moved to so much admiration that he sounded Dick upon the possibility of persuading her to accept from him a very valuable filly! Even Dick, who was by no means sensitively strung, was staggered by the suggestion. As, however, he had always implicitly or evasively given D'Arcy to understand that Shiela appreciated, if she did not quite return, his admiration, Dick had to lend a grateful ear to the offer. Besides, he coveted the filly with his whole soul, and longed to see some plausible way of transferring the beautiful creature to Cahircalla stables.

“She wouldn’t accept her,” he said regretfully to D’Arcy. “It’s awfully good of you, old man; but she wouldn’t—”

“Not directly from me, of course,” D’Arcy said with that increase in his slight obliquity of vision which expressed what a blush usually expresses in ingenuous youth. “But I might give her to you, you know; for her—I mean,” he hastened to add in his dread of being done out of the filly by Dick, without getting from Shiela the credit of the gift. “I mean you might tell her that I intended the filly for her, but that I hadn’t the courage to give it to her from myself.”

Dick shook his head sorrowfully with unfeigned regret. “She wouldn’t take her. How could she?”

“Sound her about it, anyway, and see what she says,” urged D’Arcy, who, indeed, would have rejoiced exceedingly to

get from Shiela the credit of the offer, without having to part with the filly—to carry off at once the corn in the sack and the cup in the sack's mouth.

“Oh, I know what she'll say,” Dick rejoined despondently. “She wouldn't hear of it; no girl would, and Shiela least of all.”

“But if I give the filly to you for her,” persisted D'Arcy. “You could tell her, you know, in confidence, that she was really for her.”

“Do you mean me,” cried Dick with sudden and dishonest hope—“Do you mean me to tell her that I promised you to pretend to her the filly was for me?”

As Dick's eagerness convinced his crafty friend that he would never risk the return of the filly by saying a word of this to Shiela, D'Arcy demurred at once to the suggestion.

“Look here, Fitzgerald, I shall send her for your sister to try, and when she has tried her a bit you might ask her to accept it from me.”

“Oh, of course, if you like,” Dick said somewhat sullenly. Though D’Arcy was sufficiently coarse-grained, he did not now really expect Shiela to accept the filly, however much she might have been charmed with the animal on trial; but at least he thought the generosity of the offer would tell in his favour. In fact, he stood, as he thought, to win in any event. If she accepted the filly she must accept the giver of so valuable a present; if, on the other hand, she declined its acceptance, D’Arcy would have with her the credit, without the cost, of the gift. It never did, or could, occur to him that she might resent the offer as an unwarrantable piece of impertinence. As, however, Dick, in

spite of his thickness of skull and skin, had a shrewd suspicion of this, he resolved to go warily about the negotiation. Accordingly, no sooner was the filly stabled at Cahircalla (on the day before the murder of the sergeant), than Dick hurried off to find Shiela to break the business to her diplomatically.

He found her in her own room reading a newspaper (an unusual occupation with her) which she put hastily away upon hearing his knock. In truth, she had been reading with an interest, whose source was uncertain even to herself, a furious Tory leader upon the futile police attempt to find firearms on Dundas's person or premises.

"Do come out, Shiela. D'Arcy has sent over the bay filly for my opinion of her."

"He wants you to buy her?"

"Buy her! She's worth eighty guineas if she's worth a farthing. He knows very

well that I couldn't buy her, even if he meant to sell her, which he doesn't."

"What has he sent her here for, then?"

"For my opinion of her, I tell you," Dick said, impatiently. "So come; put on your habit, and we'll have a canter to Carrigglass."

"But—very well," she corrected herself to say, after a moment's pause.

When she had donned her habit and come out, she found the side saddle on the bay filly, which she at once, and most decidedly, declined to ride.

"He doesn't want my opinion of her, Dick."

"Oh, but he does; he does really. He wanted you to try her, as she's for a lady," Dick answered, with undiplomatic eagerness.

"You know as well as I do, Dick, that Mr. D'Arcy doesn't want either of our

opinions about a horse which he is not trying to sell us."

"Why should he send her over then?" Dick asked, with the petulance of defeat.

"I'm sure I don't know; but I'm not going to ride her," she added, with a positiveness which seemed to Dick to contradict the first part of her reply.

"Well, don't, if you don't like," cried Dick, with his usual relapse, when in a temper, into schoolboyishness. "It really doesn't matter very much, to him or me, whether you try her or not."

The diplomatic Dick, having shown by his manner how very much it mattered, both to him and to D'Arcy, sent back both horses to the stable, and gave up the expedition altogether in a huff. In fact, if he had confessed to Shiela in so many words his intention to trap her into using, if not into accepting, D'Arcy's horse, he could hardly

have shown her his hand more plainly. As the horses were being led back to the stables, Ralph appeared at the hall door, from which Shiela had by this disappeared upstairs to change her habit. On seeing the filly, side-saddled, pass the library window, Ralph, being naturally curious about her, had come out to question Dick.

“Halloa, Dick!” he called after his son, who turned and came slowly back to the steps, “whose is the mare?”

“Tom D’Arcy’s.”

“What brings her here?” Dick, on the spur of the moment, resolved to take his father into the alliance.

“He wanted Shiela to try her!”

“Shiela! What! Do you mean that she asked him for her?” cried Ralph, sharply.

“It’s just the other way about,” Dick replied aggrievedly. “He’s bent upon her

trying her, and keeping her, for that matter ; while she won't even ride her, only because she's his."

"Phew!" cried Ralph. And then, after a pause, he added—"Why, how long has this been going on?"

"There's nothing going on; but he's very hard hit, while she dislikes him for some reason or other."

"Do you mean that he's—that he's proposed for her?" gasped Ralph, who so little regarded Shiela as grown up, that he almost resented her being let out of the nursery.

"No; but he would if he dared. He's dead gone on her."

"Well!" cried Ralph, completely bewildered by this astonishing state of things. "But why does she dislike him?" he asked presently, after a pause.

"I don't know, but she does. I wish

she didn't, for he's an awfully good fellow."

"She's getting to give herself great airs," her father said in his usual censorious tone when speaking of Shiela. "She ought to be packed off to school," he added, as though the girl were encouraging, instead of discouraging addresses. Then did Dick feel remorseful for his betrayal of Shiela.

"After all, she can't help her likes or dislikes," he pleaded apologetically.

"I don't know what she has to do with likes or dislikes at her age," cried her father, with outrageous unreasonableness. "She'll be packed off to school if she doesn't take care, and so you may tell her."

"You talk as if she had encouraged him, but that is just what she hasn't done at all," Dick retorted irritably, thus driving his father upon another tack.

"I don't know that she hasn't encouraged

him. She must have given him some encouragement, or he wouldn't have sent over that mare."

"But he didn't; he sent her over to me, hoping that I might get Shiela to try her at least. But she refused, merely because the mare was his."

"Hoity-toity! she's lost her head altogether at the first attention shown her. At the same time, Dick, I don't think it was a right thing of D'Arcy to do, if, as you say, she gave him no encouragement."

"Oh! he's off his head about her, and he bothered me so to get her to try the filly that I couldn't refuse. After all, if she had tried her, he'd have taken it as encouragement, so that I don't see what else she could have done but refuse," Dick said, feeling more and more remorseful as his own temper cooled, and his father's warmed.

However, the mischief was now done irreparably, since Ralph, of course, disclosed the affair to his wife; and both, upon consultation, decided that Mr. Tom D'Arcy would be a most excellent match for Shiela. Mrs. Fitzgerald had been fascinated by the off-hand way in which Mr. Tom D'Arcy had habitually spoken of Sir Geoffrey Jackson, Lord Kiltannan, Hardress Westropp (the master of the hounds), and General George Goold-Moroney, as though they were as easy-fitting and familiar to him as his gloves; while Ralph saw in the match the cancelling of a heavy mortgage, which Tom's father, a miser and usurer, held on his property. Besides, he was greatly taken with the wonderful shrewdness whereby Tom seemed to make money out of the most slippery of all trades—that of horseflesh. “He's the cleverest young fellow in the country,” he

pronounced decidedly. "I don't care what they say about his having been bitten here, and let in there, and dropped a heap of money on this and that racecourse. It's all jealousy, for where does the money come from? Not from 'Old Mouser'" (a nickname of Tom's worthy father), "for even Tom, with all his cleverness, couldn't screw sixpence out of that old skinflint. If he drops money everywhere, how is it that he has always money to drop? It's just jealousy, and nothing else, for there isn't another young fellow in Munster with so old a head on his shoulders as Tom D'Arcy: not another."

Ralph, it will be seen, did not look at things from a high moral standpoint; nevertheless, such were the encomiums upon Tom with which her father hoped to impress Shiela in his favour! In truth, he understood better what was passing in the

mind of the dog at his heels, or the horse in his dogcart, than he did the character of his own daughter. Love is the only pass-key to character, and even that will not always unlock its innermost chambers. Without it we can see little of another's heart, and that little as through a glass, darkly, and from the outside.

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